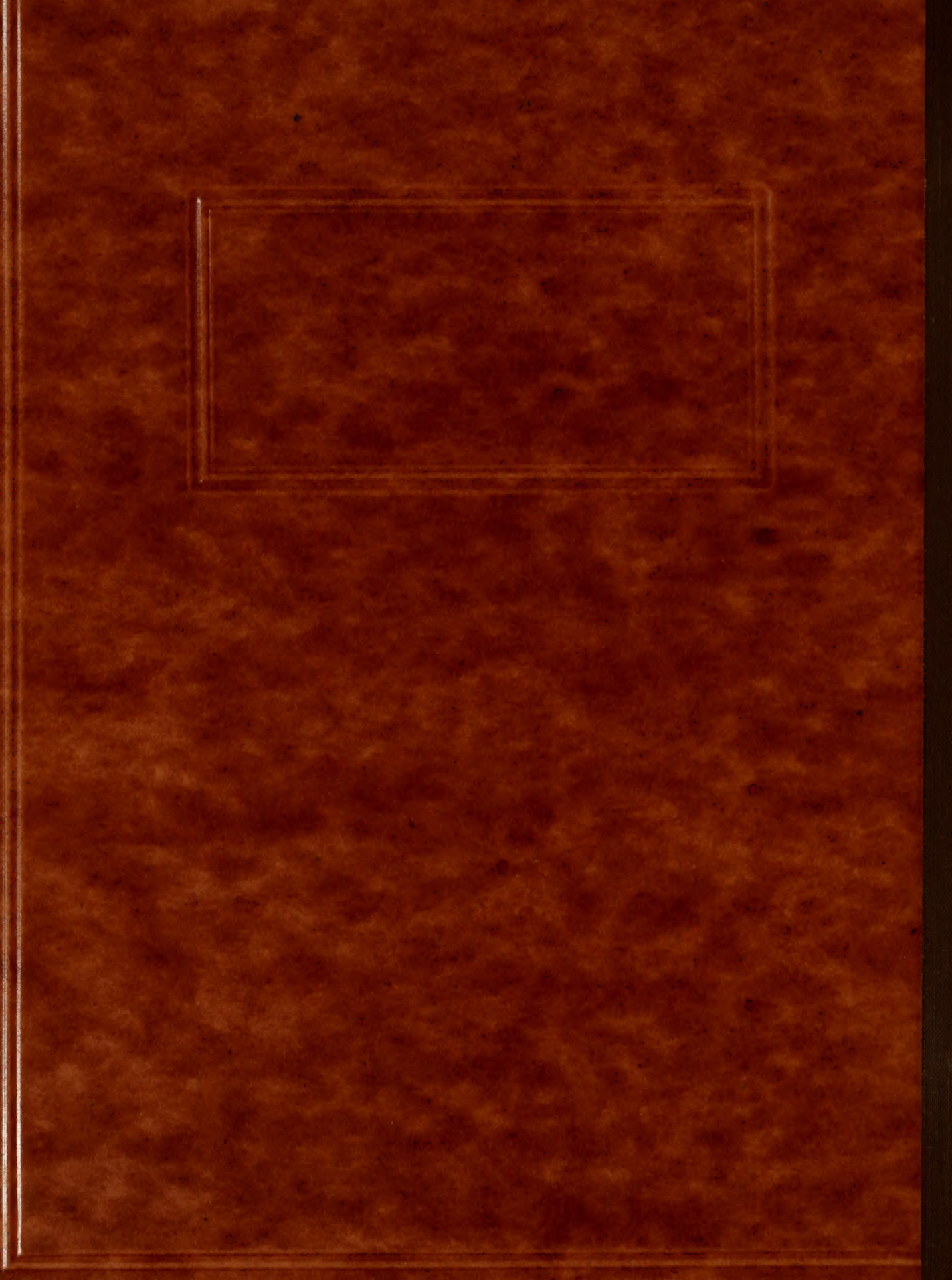


ALBERT MANTHORNE

A Novel

PAUL ESTAVER

1949
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BOSTON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

A Novel
Volume I

ALBERT MANTHORNE

by
Paul Estaver, A.B.

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the
Degree of Master of Arts.

1949

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Introduction

The purpose of Albert Manthorne is, in general, to indicate my belief that our times of unrest and change and uncertainty need not force the sensitive, intelligent individual either to recede into unthinking atrophy or to go into fits of depression leading to insanity or suicide, or to lose himself in any form of escapism whatever. I feel such an individual can recognize his environment for its worth, or lack of it, then stabilize himself both in mind and in body. Such a thesis has been denied, to a greater or lesser extent, by our major realistic writers in essence since the turn of the century -- since the time when Hardy and Frank Norris began their novels of gloomy determinism. The ubiquitous realistic and naturalistic schools have been offset, of course, by well-accepted writers as Lloyd Douglas and William Saroyan, but while Douglas's writing is little more than an ethical opiate, the ebullience of Saroyan pales after the book has been returned to the shelf and the spell is broken. Behind the piety of the one and the lust for life of the other lurks the shadow of press-agentry.

By no means is Albert Manthorne to be regarded as a panacea. I want only to show that adjustment to a world of any time is possible. I do not feel that our world is more unhealthy or more trying than that of the past. Barbarism and kindness, love and death have come down through the centuries side by side. Death by the atom bomb and torture in a

concentration camp, or the fear of these, are no worse than the Inquisition, the guillotine, or torture on the rack. The neuroses of yesterday have been given scientific nomenclature today. We may not be better off than our ancestors, although it is possible, but our situation is not worse.

To be more specific, in Albert Manthorne I am attempting to depict an individual who tried to slough off the restrictions of convention and who, in his effort to live his life by his own standards, has offended our arbitrary laws of common decency. The importance of this lies not in the fact of what he did, but in the fact that our mores, whether or not they are merely "lip-service laws", were strong enough to cause him to suffer when he attempted to reorient himself in society. He was a personality who could disregard upbringing and tradition; he had set up his own standards, but there was no way for him to bring the world around to his code.

Albert Manthorne desperately wanted to be an individual, to feel that he was important, but he foundered because he turned his back on society instead of accepting it. In order to gain the opposite shore, he tried to find a way around rather than diving in or finding a boat. Actually it took some time for him to realize that he needed a boat at all. His attempts to escape were multifold: his affair with Mary, pointless almost from the start, the night flights in his Cadillac, his solitaire games, his running to Nicky Luce for

consolation and anesthesia.

Eventually he saw that his method was at fault, but when he tried to change he found that the results of his past actions could not be lightly cast aside. His sister Julie's life, Kit's happiness, and Mary's were all marred by his behavior, and his own unhappiness was in seeing the fruits of his own thoughtless selfishness.

Rather than falling into prolonged fits of morose depression or committing suicide, however, he pulls himself together in an attempt to find what can be done about it, and it is Kit, the one whom he has hurt the most, who helps him find himself.

At the end of volume one he has run almost as far as he can from reality, and while his attempts to escape are not ended, each succeeding try proves to be more futile than the last. He has even begun to change his course in his effort to straighten Julie out and in his half-formed decision to tell Kit about his affair with Mary, for better or worse. Then he again tries to flee, only to be caught by the relentless dawn.

At the beginning of volume two he decides, with Kit's advice, that it would be best to drop out of school before he is flunked out, in the hope of making a fresh start in the January semester. All Al can see for the future, however, is a repetition of the old pattern of procrastination and failure. In a desperate effort to clean the slate he tells Kit he loves her, and almost in the same breath confesses the

affair with Mary. Kit's balance is severely shaken, and during the course of the following scene she says a number of unkind but pointed things to him through her hysteria. For the first time in his life Al really suffers. He has never loved anyone enough before to see what his selfishness could do.

After he takes Kit home, he makes one more frantic attempt to flee in the Cadillac, but the car, too, proves unreliable and breaks down, forcing him to take a bus home. On the way the bus is stopped on a lonely road by a 6000-volt wire, and for a few minutes Al is caught in a little drama of power and tenseness, but the bubble breaks again when he attempts to share it with Nicky.

Later that night he comes home to find his mother worrying about Julie who is out late and unaccounted for with Clifton. When the couple finally come in, Al takes Clifton to task and discovers that Clifton, for all his saintliness, has been having an affair with Julie. Here at last is a physical thing to fight. Al wades into him, and the battle that follows nearly kills them both before Julie and Mrs. Manthorne can intervene. It ends in Clifton's leaving the Manthorne household, understandably enough, but in a few days Julie follows to elope with him.

Meanwhile Al is on the road back. At first, relations between him and Kit are very uncertain, but time and conscious effort gradually strengthen them. She is generous

enough to let the past recede as quickly as it can, once she realizes Al is genuinely repentant. Together they hunt for a solution for him. It is understood that he should start school again, but with what goal? A vocational goal must be one at which he will have the desire to apply himself industriously and at length. In trying to decide what profession he will aim for, he and Kit go into a consideration of his interests and abilities. He does not feel that he has any outstanding abilities in the face of his past record, but Kit points out that his gregariousness and love of spontaneous philanthropic actions would be compatible with the various public service professions. After consideration of the various possibilities, he decides on the ministry, with some misgivings, and enrolls in a philosophy major to prepare for divinity school. He also takes one two-hour course in drawing and painting.

At his decision to be a minister, all becomes sweetness and light in his relations at home and with school. Society, with considerable self-satisfaction, opens its arms to the prodigal. His mother gives him every help and opportunity possible for study, and the school promises to continue his education free through divinity school after his G.I. money runs out. Again, however, there are misgivings; he finds not only objectionable people, but also objectionable dogma in the Church. His decision to enter the ministry, he finds, has not made the teachings of the Church any more adequate for

his needs. Privately he decides that someday he will leave the organized church in search of something more pragmatic. He had found a boat, but its seaworthiness is now in doubt.

His studies, meanwhile, are not going as he had hoped. He does his best to apply himself, but the results are mediocre. More and more of his time is spent in painting, for which he discovers he had a natural bent. He finds a beauty, truth, and satisfaction in nature and painting that he is unable to find in the doctrines of his church.

One day the art instructor tells him he has unusual ability and asks why he doesn't do more with it. Al tries to disregard such a suggestion and redoubles his efforts in his philosophy courses for a few days. Finally, however, he breaks down and tells Kit he doesn't like the Church; he wants to be an Artist.

To Kit, this seems an evidence of the old instability, and another emotional upheaval ensues. In the preceding chapters it will have been shown that Al's pride has smarted at what he feels is her managing of him, but now he has gained enough confidence in himself to stay with the point. He indicates that she is holding him back, and she feels that he is off on another flight of fancy. What future, she asks frankly, is there for her as the wife of a starving artist? Her own childhood has had too much insecurity for her to be able to accept such a life. After considerable difficulty, they reach a compromise. He agrees to become a teacher and

plans a course combining fine arts and education courses, until art proves whether it will be an avacation or a vocation for him.

To return to Julie, when she and Clifton eloped Al was sure she was pregnant, which turns out not to be the case. For six months, however, Al will not believe it and refuses to see her. When they do meet he finds her changed. Not only is Clifton's domination what she needs, but she has adopted his prosaic attitudes and bourgeois tastes. Al sees that he and his sister will never again have the bond of their younger days, but he understands that she has at least found a more satisfactory life.

There remains the problem of Mary, which can never be entirely solved as far as Al is concerned. It will be remembered that she and Fred were to leave in January for Hartford where Fred was to teach. Little is heard from them until they return to Cambridge in June to spend the summer with Fred's mother before heading west. When Al and Kit see Mary in June, they learn for the first time that she is expecting a baby the next month. With a sense of shock the horrifying possibility occurs to Al that perhaps the child is his. Frantically he arranges to speak to Mary alone. Whether or not she knows whose the baby is, she declares she does not .

After several uncomfortable days Al summons his courage and mentions the subject to Kit, to whom the possibility has already occurred. However, this time, instead of driving them

apart, the situation has almost the opposite effect -- banding them together as would disease or any more common disaster.

Again we find the situation where individuals may and can adjust themselves to the status quo. Al and Kit may never know for a certainty the paternity of Mary's child. It will always be there between them, but if they are ever to find happiness they must learn from the situation without continuing to live with it.

The end of the novel, however, concerns Al's stability and his coming success as a personality, if not as an artist. The impression I want to convey would dictate, indeed, that he should never be a great artist; I do not think he has the qualifications. I would rather have it understood that his satisfaction comes from the self-respect he finds in creative work and from the knowlege that he has developed the ability to live with himself and with society -- and without utterly resigning himself to the laws and whims of the latter.

CHAPTER 1

On the first of January, 1946, Manthorne, Albert S., private first class, was honorably discharged from the Army of the United States, after having served thirty months and four days, eighteen months of which service were spent on the continent of Europe. He had been decorated with a good-conduct medal, a combat infantryman's badge, a bronze star award, and a European Theatre of Operations ribbon with four battle stars.

On the same day Mr. Albert S. Manthorne travelled from the Fort Devens, Massachusetts, Separation Center to his home in Cambridge where he was greeted by his mother and his sister Julia. His first significant act upon arriving home was to extract from his duffle-bag two pairs of long woolen, olive-drab underwear, and to burn both pairs carefully and completely in the fire that had been lighted in the parlor fireplace for his homecoming.

He was then conducted by his mother and sister to his bedroom on the third floor where he was shown that each item in the room was exactly as he had left it before going overseas, complete to an autographed picture of one Martha Warren who was by this time Martha Blake, mother of Samuel Blake, Jr. As soon as Mrs. Manthorne and Julia left to prepare dinner, Albert dispensed with Martha's picture, placed the bed where the book case had been, moved the overstuffed chair to where

the desk had been, put the desk in the store-room, dragged the book case to where the bed had been, and went down to eat.

On subsequent occasions when veteran readjustment was mentioned, he reflected somewhat smugly how quick and painless his own had been. He was at this time twenty-one years, seven months, and fourteen days old.

His mustering-out pay was three hundred dollars, issued to him at the rate of one hundred dollars per month. By the fifteenth of January he had taken his first one hundred dollars, borrowed an additional one hundred and fifty, and purchased a 1934 Plymouth automobile which came to be known as Chloe. Chloe was a bruised black-and-blue color, had two broken windows, a sagging front spring, burned one quart of oil to twenty-five miles, and habitually became lodged in low gear. Albert and Chloe kept company for approximately six months, during which period she consumed four hundred and twenty six dollars worth of fuels, parts and labor. She was sold on June 21st for the sum of two hundred and fifty dollars after a nerve-racking three-day campaign while Albert's friends assured him that he would do better to give her away or drive her into the Charles River.

On the 23rd of January, 1946, Albert Manthorne re-entered the College of the City of Boston as a second semester sophomore upon the urging of his mother. His marks in June were:

English History

C

General Psychology	C
Geology	C
American Literature Since 1865	C
Spanish IV (intermediate)	F

During the summer of the same year Albert, Julia and Mrs. Manthorne took separate jobs in northern New England. The house in Cambridge was rented for July and August to Mr. George Sutton, his wife and two children, who otherwise would have had nowhere but park benches to sleep.

CHAPTER 2

Julia Manthorne slept in the top of a double bunk in hut number one. It was still dark when she awoke, but she had no inclination to go back to sleep--Sunday or no. A light snapped on over in the dining hall, the glare from it coming faintly through the screened window by Julie's head. She sat up, fished her glasses from the shelf, and stared out through the trees toward the large frame building, but she could not see anyone in it. The light came from one of the kitchen windows where an unfrosted bulb was still swinging slightly on its long wire like a plumb line. Glancing over her shoulder into the darkened hut, Julie could see the shadows of the trees against the wall, swaying, reflecting the swing of the light. She held her wrist just above the level of her eyes in an effort to catch the light on her watch, but its face was too tiny to see in the near-darkness.

The hut in which she slept was one of thirty-two purchased from the Civilian Conservation Corps, in the late '30's. These thirty-two cabins sat like so many shoe-boxes around three edges of an acre of cleared land near a lake in the New Hampshire woods, and for ten summers had formed the entire living quarters for Camp Marquette, except for the cooks' shack which was off-campus, since it had men in it. During the years, there had been added the "john", the chapel, the Ada F. Swansea

Dining Hall, and a small shack at the lakeside, owned and supported by the Red Cross, who also supplied the swimming crew, of which Julie was one.

Through the years of female occupancy, the cabins had lost none of their barrack-like qualities. They were long, low one storey boxes with wooden walls painted a woodsey green, and tar-papared roofs that had to be repaired every three years. In the interests of economy, they had been constructed without windows, but with wooden flaps which opened from the top, forming a continuation of the eaves, and leaving a screened space high enough to let in ample light, but which could not be looked out of, unless one sat on an upper bunk. This arrangement was considerably easier on their present occupants than it had been on the C. C. C. boys who had to live in them the year round.

Miss Duffy, the camp leader, would have preferred to have had the cabins scattered around the edges of the clearing informally, but the men who had brought them in had not been told of this, and so had planted them as they had uprooted them--perfectly aligned around the acre. The military spirit had carried through. As each new group of girls arrived, every second week, they put away dresses and bright colors, and were loaned uniform outfits--green shorts and grey sweat-shirts, each with a green pine-tree stamped on its chest.

It could be seen at a glance, however, that the cabin in

which Julie lived was not subjected to such a regime. In the first place, it housed the minimum of eight, rather than the maximum of sixteen girls. Its occupants were not subject to change every two weeks, but stayed from June 21st until September 9th. They were the lake and special crafts crew, second only to Miss Duffy in privileges, and infinitely superior to the common camp councillors, who were required to rise and retire with their charges, and conduct themselves in an exemplary fashion.

The lake crew were the life guards and swimming instructors, graduates of the Red Cross Swimming Camp, and required to be at least eighteen years old. The special crafts crew were councillors with seniority.

Julie had been just old enough to qualify for duty at Camp Marquette at the beginning of the summer. Being the last and the newest arrival, she had drawn an upper bunk at the back of the hut. It was the first summer she had earned any money or been away from the family, and it had been a happily successful summer--until yesterday.

During the night it had rained, and as she lay on her back, staring at the indistinct rafter over her head, she could hear the water still dripping from the trees. Large initials U. H. had been burned into the rafter, and Julie half-imagined, half-saw them by the light from the dining hall, trying to think of names that began with U. The faint, early-morning

smell of the pine woods, the light sounds from the other girls, and the dampness of the coarse wool blankets all bespoke a sleeping world, to which the glaring light from the dining-hall seemed a discord.

Who would be up at an hour like this? What time was it, anyway? She tried to make out the time on her watch again, but with no more success. Across the hut, Fran Connors's alarm clock ticked noisily into the darkness. By squinting her eyes at its luminous face, Julie could barely see that it said 5:35 or 6:25, but she could not tell which. It must be 5:35...if it were 6:25, the sun would be up...but who would be in the kitchen by 5:35? It must be Oscar, the baker, but even he was up early for a Sunday.

Julie slipped as quietly as she could from her bed, shoved her feet into her moccasins, gathered up her sweatshirt and dungarees, and let herself out of the hut. As she opened the screen door, the spring snapped and hummed for a second, then twanged again as she gently closed it. The morning was so quiet that she was afraid that even the twanging might wake someone.

The lights in the "john" stayed on all night. It was set back of the far side of the cabins away from the lake for sanitary purposes. The glow, if not the light, was visible to Julie as she hurried toward it, carrying her clothes in her arms. After a whole summer of tripping over roots in the

darkness, she needed no light to find her way.

The "john" itself was a depressing place at this hour. Only one light was left burning, which gave the soapstone sinks and bare walls the spirit of a neglected granary. It was a big barn of a building, with toilets lining one side. The frosted windows were at eye level, and opened only at the top. An addition at the back housed a large, communal shower room.

This, she thought, is the gloomiest place of this whole gloomy camp...if it's Oscar in the kitchen, he should have some coffee hot by this time. Whoever it is has been there twenty minutes already.

She dressed quickly, shivering slightly as the cool air touched her bare skin. For a person engaged in an athletic occupation, she was strangely thin, with the drooped posture and hollow chest commonly associated with tuberculosis. She had a constant, heavy cough that worried her mother who subjected her to rigorous yearly physical examinations. When she wore her baggy sweat-shirt, she looked as flat chested as a boy. Her whole appearance was less that of a girl than of a boy in his early teens....unusually broad shoulders and long legs. Her walk was masculine and slightly pigeon toed, her hands always seeming to seek her pockets.

Her hair, especially during the summer non-male environment, hung straight and a little snarled to her shoulders.

Her features were large and looked the more rugged because of her thinness. There was nothing boyish, however, about her eyes. People seldom noticed them, for she almost never looked squarely at anyone, but when she did, her look was intense--almost theatrical. Her eyes were an unusual, clear blue, almost purple in its intensity. In her unselfconscious moments, they were startlingly beautiful in her pale, plain face.

When she had slipped into her sweat-shirt and dungarees, she fished a pair of socks out of the pants pockets and put them on, being careful not to touch her feet to the cement floor which seemed always to be slightly damp. Leaving her rolled-up pajamas on a windowsill, she went outdoors and headed toward the dining-hall.

It was getting lighter by this time. The mass of over-cast that had blanketed the sky the previous evening had broken into shreds as if by an explosion. Looking eastward toward the lake where the foliage thinned, Julie could see that the yet invisible sun made the shreds a solid purple against a background of pale yellow haze.

She was thoroughly awake, now, and the scene of yesterday with Fran Connors came back with painful clarity. Fran could at least have been more tactful about saying it in front of other people. Julie demanded consideration of no one who didn't want to give it, but it was humiliating having other

people watching when she was being practically fired.

It was almost suppertime when Fran had decided to tell her. The whole crew had been there, changing from their bathing suits--all except Jean Brophy. If Jean had been there, it would have been too much. Julie could not forget the coarse voice even now.

"Hey, Manthorne, you're supposed to report to Miss Duffy after supper." Fran was a brawny young woman of twenty-five with clipped, sandy hair, and flat features, as though she always slept with her face in her pillow. She was one of those life-guards who always wore a whistle off-duty, like a policeman.

"Oh?" said Julie. "What's she want with me?"

"I dunno why she wants to tell you herself. I can do it perfectly well. You're not coming back next year."

"No?...why?" Julie was glad she was sitting up on her bunk at the time. Although she didn't look at anyone, she felt that all the girls stopped dressing to listen. She wished she had not asked why.

"Because I didn't recommend you."

"But...why?" Julie stammered. She didn't want to hear any more about it, but she felt that she must carry the situation to a conclusion. Why did everyone have to stop and listen?

"You weren't cut out to do this kind of work, Manthorne.

You're too light to be a guard, and you haven't enough voice to teach..no control over the kids." She bit a hangnail from her middle finger and spit it to the floor. "You have to control 'em before you can teach 'em anything. Miss Duffy'll tell you about it anyhow. I think she'll let you come back as a councillor, if you want to."

At this point, the bugler had fortunately blown mess call and terminated the scene. No one had spoken to her, even to say, "Tough break, kid." Instead, they had all filed slowly out the door like so many strangers.

Walking toward the dining hall, now in the morning, Julie wondered how she had gotten up nerve to eat supper and go through it all over again with Miss Duffy. The old girl had tried to be nice about it, offering her the councillor's job, but she was obviously relieved when Julie refused the chance.

What would be the point of coming back if she couldn't swim?

The strangest part of the situation was how everyone suddenly seemed to change. This summer, for the first time in her life, she had felt confident and popular, buoyed up by the sense of doing a job well. Although she was occasionally tired, she had not missed one day of work. Instead of trying to be feminine, she had capitalized on her boyishness, never bothering with makeup or fussing with her hair.

Whatever the cause she had been happy, and too busy to

ask herself why. Up until yesterday afternoon, all the girls, as well as the staff, seemed friendly. Even Fran Connors had left her alone, if she had not made any personally friendly overtures.

After supper and all evening, however, Julie became increasingly aware how indifferent everyone really was to her fortunes -- that not one person in the whole camp cared whether she failed or succeeded -- whether she came back next year or not.

They almost seem to hope I'll stay home, she thought, sighing to herself. It's not my fault I can't bellow like a water buffalo...discipline, my foot! I can get more cooperation from the kids by treating them like grown-ups. They all learned to swim, didn't they? Even little Lillian Russo got her beginner's pin before she left, and they don't make them any tougher than she was.

Julie and Jean Brophy had graduated from the swimming camp together last June, and had asked to be allowed to work together at Camp Marquette, but once work had begun, the quickly-formed friendship had slowly faded. Julie could not help noticing that Fran had helped Jean with her classes whenever she could, but only once had Fran come to Julie's aid -- on the day little Russo had gotten ducked and was screaming, "You old bitch!" at Julie, insisting that it had been no accident.

Oscar at least would be friendly. He wouldn't know anything about it, or care if he did know. Since it was difficult

for him to understand English, he seldom talked to anyone, but Julie had always gone out of her way to speak to him and had come to look forward to his answering nod and smile.

As she opened the big screen door of the dining hall, the smell of biscuits baking and fresh coffee met her nose. The dining hall was a great high building, like a hangar for a dirigible, open at the sides and reinforced at the top with black steel braces. Her footsteps echoed as she made her way between the tables, toward the partition that separated the kitchen from the dining room. It was almost broad daylight, now.

Julie thought for a moment that she heard voices from the kitchen, but if she had, whoever it was had stopped to listen to her footsteps. She pushed through the swinging door into the kitchen, and was just about to ask Oscar for some coffee, when she noticed that he was not alone. Jean Brophy was sitting on the big table, swinging her feet.

"Hi, Julie, you're up early," Jean said. She was about Julie's height, but of much stockier build, a coarse-featured, pleasant self-confident girl. Her fluffy blond hair was bobbed, giving her large face a rather square look. Her hands had always bothered Julie. The fingers were short--stubby almost, the thumbs looking more like big toes than part of a hand. As she raised her coffee to her lips, Julie noticed that, as always, her hands shook slightly. Instead of the usual camp

uniform she was wearing an elaborately flowered dress and high-heeled pumps.

"You're up early, yourself," said Julie, eyeing the dress. "Going somewhere?"

"Coming, kid, not going."

"You mean you've been out all night?" Julie asked, annoyed at the incredulous tone in her own voice.

"Yes, dearie, the whole, long night." Jean's mocking tone was that of one telling a wonderful fairy tale to a three year old. "Oscar!" The tone changed to that of a general to his forces. "Some coffee for the lady."

Oscar took down a cup from the shelf and, grinning, filled it from one of three large silver urns.

"I don't think I want any coffee."

"Of course you do," said Jean, almost shouting.

"Okay," Julie sighed. Her only thought was to get out of there and away where she could be alone to think. She had wanted to talk to Oscar, but as he brought her the coffee, still grinning, she wondered if Jean hadn't told him about last night, and they had been laughing at her when she came in... No, that was foolish. Jean probably didn't even know about it, yet. Julie pulled a chair up to the table and sat down, drinking the coffee without bothering to ask for cream or sugar. It was strong and bitter, and very hot.

"Well, kid," Jean said, "only seven more days in this

What will have been the result of the war?

It will be a great one.

And the result will be a great one.

It will be a great one.

It will be a great one.

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hole, then back to the big city."

Julie mumbled something about seven days being too damn long. Jean looked up at her curiously for a moment. "What's wrong with you, anyhow? You're dragging around like you just lost you last friend or your job or something. Buck up, kid!"

Julie felt as though Jean had slapped her on the back when she said it. She choked on the coffee, and despite herself, tears began coming to her eyes.

For the first time, Jean saw that something was genuinely wrong. Her face became serious, and she slipped from the table with the intention of putting her arm around Julie's shoulders, but Julie fled before Jean could reach her, her sobbing audible now.

"Julie!" Jean called, starting after her, but Oscar's big paw caught her and held her back.

"I theenk she wantsa be alone," he said.

At the door, Julie glanced back just in time to see Jean shrug her shoulders in response to Oscar's remark.

Once outside she quickly controlled her crying and walked slowly down the path that led to the lake. Jean doesn't know, she thought, or she never would have said that. It isn't her fault that Fran likes her and not me. When she finds out what's happened, she'll want to apologize, and that will make it all the more mortifying.

The sun had risen by now, but as Julie came to the lake's

edge, the heavy mist, rolling slowly in from the warm water veiled the morning light, almost obscuring the wharf and raft. Julie scuffed out to the end of the wharf and lay face down on it, staring into the glassy water. A small wave lapped against the piling three times, then stopped. Down the shore somewhere, a crow cawed. The mist was very heavy, except for a small space perhaps the height of a rowboat above the water's surface.

Lying there, Julie imagined she saw a small, cocky Lillian Russo come to the water's edge, plunge in with more confidence than skill, and start swimming out, farther and farther until her head looked like a piece of black wood on the surface. As Julie watched, little Russo disappeared under the water only to come up struggling and gasping as she tried to scream. Then Julie was swimming toward her with strong, sure strokes, glancing coolly up now and again to make sure the child was still there. She seemed to hear herself calling to her to float on her back as she had taught her. Then Julie was slowly, evenly carrying the girl back to safety, back to where Fran Connors and Miss Duffy waited anxiously at the shore. Then....

Julie trailed her hand listlessly through the water, making small curved wakes as though her fingers were miniature speedboats, racing side by side. She was surprised at how warm the water felt.

CHAPTER 3

The morning sunlight, doubly bright from its reflection on the ocean, cascaded yellowly through the six great French doors that opened from the stone promenade into the somber oak paneled lobby of the Ocean View Manor. These first morning hours were the only time that the spirit of light or youth seemed to penetrate the heavy walls of the building. During the rest of the day and especially at night, age prevailed. It was a summer rest home for aged couples. Mr. Young, the manager, and all the help were well past middle age. Children and animals were forbidden by spirit if not by sign, and it seemed that should anything young inadvertently venture on the premises, it would grow old before it could leave.

The building itself was a quasi-copy of a Tudor Gothic manor house, with four square towers each surmounted by four swirled finials. The high crenelated granite walls were punctured by doors and windows placed seemingly at random, each topped by a squat Gothic arch. Such modern innovations as electricity and the internal combustion engine were either concealed entirely or made as inconspicuous as possible. Automobiles were allowed not nearer than the stables, and lighting fixtures were camouflaged by huge black twisted candelabra which swung from the wainscotted ceiling. Any additional electric lights were grudgingly disguised as kerosene lanterns or

2. Summary

The following are the main results of the present study. The first result is that the proposed method is able to handle the problem of missing data in a more efficient way than the existing methods. The second result is that the proposed method is able to handle the problem of missing data in a more efficient way than the existing methods. The third result is that the proposed method is able to handle the problem of missing data in a more efficient way than the existing methods. The fourth result is that the proposed method is able to handle the problem of missing data in a more efficient way than the existing methods. The fifth result is that the proposed method is able to handle the problem of missing data in a more efficient way than the existing methods. The sixth result is that the proposed method is able to handle the problem of missing data in a more efficient way than the existing methods. The seventh result is that the proposed method is able to handle the problem of missing data in a more efficient way than the existing methods. The eighth result is that the proposed method is able to handle the problem of missing data in a more efficient way than the existing methods. The ninth result is that the proposed method is able to handle the problem of missing data in a more efficient way than the existing methods. The tenth result is that the proposed method is able to handle the problem of missing data in a more efficient way than the existing methods.

candles. The most masterful touch of this type in the hotel was its hidden elevator whose carved oak doors slid closed like secret panels leaving no trace of what was behind them. To ride in the elevator, one had to request permission from the desk clerk who then rang a bell to call the elevator down from the mysterious upper recesses where it was lurking.

The desk clerk this morning was Julie's mother, Mrs. Albert Manthorne, who by her very presence represented one more concession to the age of science--she had been hired for the summer as a hotel nurse by Mr. Young. Since June when she had arrived, however, she had worn her white uniform less than a week in all and the major part of her duties had turned out to be those of a clerk rather than a nurse.

On this Sunday morning she was sitting in the lobby, enjoying the few hours of sunlight. She did not like clerk duty and had said so, and therefore had been given the early morning shift when most of the hotel residents remained in bed. She was sitting in a ladylike imitation of a Louis XV chair that contrasted strangely with its surroundings in the massive lobby, but good taste or poor it was one of the very few comfortable chairs there, and from this spot she could both enjoy the view and keep an eye on the desk in case she were needed.

A buzzer suddenly started droning in a properly modulated tone from the office. With a sigh she left her chair and, carrying her magazine, crossed the front hall and let herself

in. Sitting down at a concealed switchboard, she took the call.

"Ocean View Manor," she said into the mouthpiece.

It was the long distance operator. Nearly half the calls were long distance, since nearly half the residents of the hotel were elderly vacationing executives from New York, Philadelphia and points more distant. One couple came from Los Angeles, and each week the man made at least one extended call to his office to direct business affairs.

"I have a person-to-person call from New York to a Mr. Allston Sears," said the operator.

"I'm sorry," answered Mrs. Manthorne, "but we do not disturb our patrons before nine-thirty."

The operator relayed this information to the New York party who seemed to be somewhat ruffled by it.

"I could have Mr. Sears call New York when he arises," Mrs. Manthorne told the operator.

And so-it was arranged that Mr. Sears should call Operator #22 as soon as possible. Mrs. Manthorne made a note of it on the pad by the phone and returned with her magazine to the chair in the lobby.

Seeing her sitting there, one would naturally have assumed that she was a guest rather than an employee. Although she was not unusually tall, her gauntness gave her the appearance of additional height. Her face seemed austere, perhaps a

trifle worried, when she was not conscious of her expression. Her skin was very pale, traced by faint blue veins in her nose and forehead. This paleness, with her blue-white hair, made a harmonious background for the intensely deep blue eyes that marked her as Julie's mother. People who knew them both always commented about it, but where Julie was myopic, her mother was extremely far-sighted, and now when she was reading, wore a pince-nez that added to her severe appearance.

Her severity, however, was external. Her children knew her as a rather shy, inconsistent person who was inclined to worry and who acutely felt she could not quite fill the parental duties of both mother and father. As a young woman she had always looked forward to motherhood, and now that Mr. Manthorne was gone, she felt that the one thing left in life for her was her family.

She had a characteristic habit of biting her underlip so that it was always nicked with small shiny sores where she had broken the skin. She was unconsciously biting it now, looking off into space, the magazine forgotten in her lap, as she thought of all the things left undone over the summer, and of all the things more to do when she got home. She felt that worry was a necessary prelude to accomplishing things, and was worried now over how little she had worried during the summer.

Perhaps this fall, she thought, I can really begin to have a home for Julie and Albert. It was good that he came

home in time to continue his college in the spring semester, but in a way I wish he hadn't started school right away. It might have been better for him to have just taken the time off, or to have worked a little while. He seemed to be more interested in his friends than his schoolwork. I'll be glad when he gets adjusted enough to see that school is more than a favor to me. His restlessness is making Julie nervous, too, and she's already had too much to upset her over these past few years...

In June she had pictured her job as house nurse with pleasant anticipation--plenty of free time to read and write letters and get rested, perhaps even to paint a few of Mt. Desert Island's famous views. Now she was thankful for the job at the hotel desk. It was something to make time move, even in the comparatively quiet mornings. She did not blame the hotel people for her lonely restlessness. In this case as in most she was quick, almost anxious, to blame herself. The staff, especially Mr. Young, had been kind and courteous if not actively friendly. In June she had hoped this would be her chance to meet and enjoy people of her own age group, but she had been unable to mix well with either the help or the hotel patrons. The help came to regard her as somewhat stiff, while the patrons gave her no more attention than they did to the ornate fixtures and concealed gadgets they paid so much to maintain.

Perhaps this coming year will be better, she reflected as she rose and returned to the office. Her walk was slow, concealing the lameness caused by her arthritis. She took two vitamins from her purse and went into Mr. Young's study for a cup of water.

The Sunday papers were brought in by the elevator man who nodded pleasantly to her and left without saying a word. Mrs. Manthorne snapped the radio on, tuned it softly to Your Sunday Morning Musicale, and arranged the papers into the correct piles on the glass shelf that separated her from the hallway. Mr. and Mrs. Sears came down the carpeted stairs and went into the dining room. Earlier in the summer she would have sent a messenger to tell him of his call, but she knew better by now.

The buzzer from the switchboard sounded again. She saw it was the long distance line as she sat down, and wondered if this would be the same call for Mr. Sears.

"Ocean View Manor," she said.

"I have a call from Princeton, New Hampshire, for Mrs. Albert Manthorne," said the operator.

"This is Mrs. Manthorne speaking." Her face lighted in anticipation.

"Here's your party," said the operator after a moment. "Go ahead Princeton."

"Mother?" said the voice uncertainly. It was Julie, but

she sounded troubled.

"Hello darling, is there something the matter? You sound upset."

"I want to come home, Mother. Can you get in touch with Albie so he can come get me early?"

"What is it, dear? Weren't you planning to stay another week?"

"I can't, Mom." Mrs. Manthorne could hear her weeping over the phone. Since there was no further response to her question, Mrs. Manthorne rephrased it. "What is it, Julie, are you in trouble?"

"No--not yet, but I just can't stay any longer."

"Can't you tell me what it is? Have you lost your job?"

"Not yet."

"I don't understand, dear," said Mrs. Manthorne, biting her lip. "You sounded quite happy in your last letter--but that was over two weeks ago. Couldn't you have written more often. How can I help you if I don't know what you're doing?"

"Oh, Mother!" Julie's impatience was calming her down. "I know I should have written more, but I haven't time to talk about that now. The point is that I'm going home if I have to walk and leave all my stuff here."

"But Julie...."

"I've been told they don't want me back here, and they were nasty about it."

"It must be the way you've taken it, dear. I'm sure Miss Duffy..."

"It's not Miss Duffy, Mother, it's Fran Connors."

"Who?"

"Miss Connors, the head lifeguard. She's been after me all summer and I just can't stay around and give her the satisfaction of..." Julie stopped, not being sure what satisfaction Fran would get. "It would be too humiliating, that's all," she amended. "It's bad enough to be fired, without having to stay around for a week afterward and have everyone laughing at me."

"I'm sure no one's laughing at you, dear," said her mother.

"Well anyway, I'm going home."

"But Julie, that's what I've been trying to tell you. You can't go home. The Suttons still have the house."

"You mean they're still there?"

"Yes, dear, until next Sunday. You told me in June that it would be until September 9th, so I..."

"I know, Mother, I know, but things have changed now. Could I just go home and sleep there? Do you think they'd mind?"

"Julie, we haven't any right to ask them..."

"I'd eat all my meals out."

"That's not the point, dear."

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"Well, can I come there with you, then? I'm not going to stay here."

"I don't know where I'd put you," said Mrs. Manthorne, doubtfully. "And anyway Julie, before you make any quick decisions, suppose you tell me exactly what happened and why you want to leave. It will help you see it better yourself, just to say it out loud. So start right at the beginning and."

"Mother, there isn't time," Julie interrupted, a note of exasperation in her voice.

"Then we'll take time. We can talk until the three minutes are up and when the operator cuts in, I can have her reverse the charges and we can keep on. So now tell me what happened," she repeated.

"Well," Julie began, "it's just that I thought I was doing so well before, and then this happened and now I...I don't know..." Mrs. Manthorne could hear her weeping again at the other end.

"What did happen, dear?" There was no answer so she went on, "At the beginning of the summer I told you you'd have a harder time by going to a Catholic camp."

"It's not..." Julie started to say, and then was quiet again.

"Who is Miss Connors?" Mrs. Manthorne asked.

"The head life-guard. I told you in my letter."

Gradually, Mrs. Manthorne was able to work out a fairly

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clear picture of the situation by asking a great number of questions--a process made doubly hard by the fact that several people came to the desk in the meantime. The situation as she finally saw it, disturbed her more than she cared to have Julie know. In the spring her daughter had managed to graduate from High School with her class only through the last minute intervention of her mother with the school principal who, providentially, was an old and sympathetic family friend. It had been the latest of a series of near or complete misses which extended back into Julie's childhood. As she had undertaken each new venture, her mother had hoped with ever increasing fervor that it might prove successful. Inevitably she, with Julie, had been disappointed again. Mrs. Manthorne sighed.

"Well Julie," she said finally, "if you really want me to, I can call Albert today and have him leave his job tomorrow and bring you here. I don't want you to feel there's no place for you to go. I've always kept a home for you children, and if I had felt you needed me I would have stayed home this summer, except that you and Albert agreed with me that we should let the Suttons have the house since you two would be away and I could arrange to be."

"You did the right thing, Mama, they needed it," said Julie. She was calmer now.

"We did think it would be just as well for me to come up

here," said Mrs. Manthorne, "so that for the first time you would really be on you own."

"Then you don't want me to come up with you?"

"Now wait until I finish, dear. You never let me get half-way through a sentence without interrupting me. You've done it ever since you first talked."

"Yes, Mama. I know," said Julie with poorly concealed impatience. "I'm sorry."

"What I was trying to say was that I want you, before you decide, to think of what Albert said to you at the beginning of the summer."

"About what?"

"I remember his saying when you took the job, that even if it didn't work out well, you would at least have had the experience of being independent and away from home, so you see you have accomplished something, even though you've had trouble with your Miss Connors. You've had the experience of independence, and if you can see it through, you'll be all the more prepared for the next emergency that comes along."

Julie was silent a moment. "Did you say he'd have to quit his job to come get me?"

"I imagine he would, dear. If he were talking to you, wouldn't he tell you that if you leave now, you will have failed, but if you can stick it out, you have succeeded, even though they haven't asked you back for next year. After all,

dear, you haven't been actually dismissed."

"Is he planning to come get me next Saturday?" Julie asked.

"As far as I know, dear. You probably know better than I do. He doesn't write me even as often as you do."

"He hasn't written me much, but he did say he would come get me and I wrote him the day that it closes up here."

"Then you think you'll stay till he can get you?"

"Oh, okay, I suppose so."

Mrs. Manthorne pictured, incorrectly as it happened, Julie smiling with tears in her eyes. "Okay," she repeated, the word seeming ill-matched with the person who said it, "That's the best thing to chose, dear," and Julie, quite correctly, pictured her mother smiling with tears in her eyes.

Later, when Mr. and Mrs. Allston Sears came out from the dining hall, he went over to leave his key and request that his car be made ready for him. The woman at the desk smiled warmly at him and told him of his call from New York. As he went toward the concealed telephone booth, he tried to remember whether he had ever seen her smile before. It really made her quite attractive, he thought, and then forgot both smile and woman as operator number 22 answered him.

CHAPTER 4

Mary Mitton was ironing. The old-fashioned ironing board her mother had given them six months ago to last until Fred could finish school was uneasily balanced on the backs of two straight chairs. It was September fifth, and the fall session of school had not yet started. Fred's schooling and the life of the ironing board were both to be ended in February.

Although fall was supposedly on the way, Boston and its suburbs had been very hot all day. Life had not gone well in a number of respects for her, and so Mary was ironing with a somewhat martyred spirit, enjoying the discomfort of the perspiration running down her face. The piece she was working on was a cotton dress with a full skirt and long sleeves which looked very well when worn, but was tedious to press. The task fitted the spirit in which it was done.

Fred sat quietly in the Morris chair. Over the six months, and after several bad mistakes, he had found a satisfactory way to cope with such situations. Formerly he had tried to discover what was wrong with her, only to be rebuffed with a huffy, "Nothing!"--an obvious untruth--or to be told that if he were a sensitive person, he would know without being told. The best solution, in most cases, was to sit idly by while she acted the slave. It annoyed her to see him loaf

while she worked, which usually brought her around to the point of speaking, however impatiently. He leafed backward through a magazine, as slowly as possible, looking at the cartoons.

She spoke.

"Honey." The tone was a shade ominous.

"M?" Fred turned two pages at once.

"Must you just sit there?"

"What is it you want me to do?" He laid the magazine open on his lap and gazed at her expectantly.

"Nothing!"

She sulked a moment while he resumed his reading.

"Honey?".....more pleasant, now--the tone of one who has had a hard day and wants only a little sympathy. This, then, was it. Fred closed the magazine and laid it on the floor.

"What is it, dear?"

"How long is Al going to stay?"

"I take it you don't like him."

"Why should I?" She set the iron on its stand and turned the dress around to get at the other sleeve. It was a red-and-white striped dress with a broad black leather belt. Very pretty.

"Before we discuss the matter," Fred said, "why don't you quit ironing. You look at the world through lemon-colored glasses when you're ironing. It's also too hot."

"I can't stop in the middle of a dress."

"At the end of the dress?"

"Yes, dear." She took care to sound impatient, but she was becoming more mollified.

I'll put the board away for you when you finish," he said.

This drew a smile. "You're very sweet, darling. I can even love your friends, but it's harder when they come to visit over periods of days."

"Al's okay, Mary."

"In small doses, yes, but we seem to be having a week's prescription. Why doesn't he go home. He still has a home?"

"He told you why, honey. His mother's sublet the house for the summer, and the people won't be out until Saturday."

"But why does he have to stay with us? What does his sister do--camp on her friends?"

"She's still working at some summer resort as a life-guard."

"Couldn't Al have worked another week--somewhere else?"

"He was, dear, but he got fired."

"Small wonder." She finished the dress, put it on a hangar and hooked it on the chandelier in the dining-room.

"You don't give him a chance...you know?"

Mary didn't bother to answer this. Fred had a habit of appending "You know?" to a statement when he wanted to disagree without offending. She squeezed around the ironing board and

took the chair he had vacated.

"Surely you don't begrudge him the couch, dear. It's a poor bed at best that we can give him. Lord knows where he's eating."

"Probably he has more friends," she said absently, picking up the magazine.

"Mary, if anyone heard you talk like that, they'd think..."

"I know, dear." She would have been content to let the subject drop, having had her say, but now she felt called upon to justify herself. "I don't mean to sound small," she continued as he was about to speak, "but you know he's had all the chance in the world. He comes from a good family, he's had a good education, and until his father died, they had plenty of money. There may have been some excuse..."

"But..."

"Don't interrupt. There may have been some excuse for his being lazy when he was younger--he was spoiled enough--but his father's been dead five years, now. It's time he decided to be a little more adult...Now what were you going to say?"

"Most of your judgement is based on what I've told you about him," Fred said. "I've known him since he was a kid--you haven't. There's one major difference between you and Al, Mary," he said pausing a moment to give his words weight.

"You always wait for people to give you a reason to like them, Al is the other way around--he likes people from the time he

sees them and then concentrates on making them like him....you know?"

"You're playing with words," said Mary ignoring his reproof. "No matter how you put it, he isn't good for anything. Every month he comes in here with a new scheme...first it was music, then it was joining the merchant marine. He almost flunked out last spring. I didn't have to grow up with him to see that sort of thing."

He was silent for a moment, so she continued.

"I wouldn't mind his coming to us broke, but he comes in a Cadillac. That's where all his time and energy and thought and money go--into that old moving-van. It isn't even worth anything. He couldn't give it away."

"That's just part of him, dear. He's always been car-crazy."

"Then why doesn't he get a job as a mechanic?"

Fred grinned uncertainly. Even after eighteen months, it was not always possible to tell whether or not she was serious. "None of what you've been saying is a real reason to dislike him, though," he said finally. It seemed best to pass over her last remark. "What have you got against him?"

"He's so....sensual."

"What!...are you kidding? You never said that before."

"He is...the way he looks at you. Ask some of the other girls who know him. He gives me the creeps."

"That's silly, Mary. He never pays any attention to girls...not that I've seen."

"You just don't know your friends, then. You may say he's a man's man, or anything you like. You don't observe people, honey."

"Why didn't you say this before, then? All your fussing isn't because he's lazy or sloppy, it's physical...you know?"

"Oh, I can put up with him, all right...but that animal of his!"

"Bombo?" Fred laughed. "I must agree he's a clumsy dog."

"Honey, he's worse than that. He falls all over himself and me, and everything else in the apartment. He sheds. He.."

"He's friendly." Fred offered.

"Humph! He thinks he's a lap dog, and he weighs as much as I do. It's a wonder he's housebroken."

"Bombo's just a puppy. He'll..."

"Bombo is not a puppy. He's mentally retarded."

At this point, the nose of the object of conversation pushed open the door, which was standing ajar in a futile attempt to get cross-ventilation.

"Hello, boy," said Fred. "Where's your old man?"

Bombo offered no explanation.

"He must be outside, Mary," said Fred. "Keep an eye on the dog and I'll go see if anything is wrong." Mary could hear

him going down the stairs and out the front door. She was about to get up and go to the window, when Bombo headed her way with a friendly look in his eye.

He certainly was a large dog. His mother had been a German Shepherd, and it was a matter of speculation whether his father had been a Bloodhound, or a St. Bernard, or possibly both. When he stood on all four feet, his head was considerably above Mary's waist. His coat was obviously his mother's-- a mixture of short black and brown hair, which seemed to shed the year round. There the resemblance to any known breed stopped. His body was slim, high up on long legs. His tail was long, almost like a cow's, except that it was not raveled at the end. His outsized square paws were matched by a large square head, hung with pendulous ears. His eyes were perhaps his most appealing feature--deep-set, stupid, and amiable.

The Mittons' apartment was a small, four room affair, overcrowded with heavy furniture, and Bombo was one piece too much, not only from a human standpoint, but from his own. He did not know what to do with himself. Apparently Mary was to make the decision, for before she could stop him, he had his front paws in her lap, and was doing his best to drag up the other half.

"Bombo! Stop!" she said, annoyed and amused at once. "Why weren't you trained to keep off chairs, especially when they have people in them?"

She struggled to her feet, Bombo sliding down with a thump as his protruding hip-bones hit the floor. He seemed to have no padding at all. Righting himself hastily, he followed her to the window.

As Mary bent to peer out into the darkened street, her long black hair fell down by her face. She shook it back with that slow gesture of a self-conscious woman. The hair was quite coarse, but carefully brushed so that it hung thick and straight to her shoulders. Curled, it would have looked frivolous, since her face was austere, almost oriental, with high cheek-bones and slightly slanted heavy eyebrows. Her skin was a strange gold color. Whether or not she had Indian ancestors, she believed she did, and occasionally mentioned it, to Fred's annoyance. One never remembered her eyes, but rather the long lashes, like two shadows where eyes should be.

She was tall as the average man and probably weighed as much, but never stooped and shuffled as many tall women do. Her assured, graceful carriage bespoke poise and dignity. When she lost her temper, it was startling, coming from such an apparently calm person.

Except for his height, Fred seemed quite her opposite. His face was ruddy and pleasant, but his eyes seemed always remote, as though he were trying to remember a name. If he and Mary were unlike, they balanced each other--her color dark, his light, her quick temper, his placidity. He was tall and heavy--

he would have seemed ponderous, but for the quick way he used his hands. He wore neat, rimless glasses, giving him the impression of being a student more than an athlete.

As Mary's eyes became accustomed to the darkness, she could see the square outlines of Al's car in the faintly lit street, but neither he nor her husband was visible. The dog heard them coming up the stairs and trotted over to the door.

"Was something wrong?" she asked, straightening as they came in.

"Nothing serious," answered Fred. "Something was smelling in the back seat and he was trying to find it." Al, meantime, was playfully slapping the dog's muzzle.

"What was it," said Mary, "a body?"

"Oh, no," said Al, glancing quickly at her. He too could never be sure whether she was joking or sarcastic. "It was the remains of several old lunches--banana skins, pear cores, and such."

"Where'd you put them?"

"Threw 'em in the brook across the street." He grinned at her disapproving look. "Skunks'll get 'em," he added.

"You may think that's a joke," Fred said. "We do have skunks around here. They hang out in that lumber yard up the block."

Mary was half inclined to pursue the subject further, but a small frown from Fred stopped her. Her look of disapproval

turned from her husband back to Al.

Albert Swope Manthorne, ignoring her, sat down on a hassock, lifted his dog's front paws to his knees and looked deep into his eyes, their noses almost touching. "Isn't he sweet," he murmured to his audience.

"You look like brothers," Mary said, again picking up the magazine from the floor and settling on the couch to read it.

"Of course we do--long, lank sinewy bodies and handsome, well shaped heads," said Al. "He just hasn't shaved for a couple of days, that's all."

Actually, Al was much more catlike than canine, for despite the fact that he, like Bombo, was a sturdily built and potentially heavy individual, he moved with a lithe, quiet grace. He would have been well cast in the role of a professional tennis player, or even a dancer, although he had little use for either.

He was dressed, and apparently cool, in a T-shirt, a pair of slacks, and sneakers that might once have been white. In the summer, his casual dress did not seem so much out of place, when everyone dressed comfortably to suit the weather, but he had enough confidence in his own good looks to wear the same sport shirts, sneakers, and unpressed trousers the year round--at home, working, or in school. Any change in his clothing was a concession to the weather, not to decorum. His attitude

was not a defiance to society, but a combination of laziness, and a belief that clothes and appearance made no real difference in the essential values of the world. Rather than bothering to make a trip to the cleaner's, he would wear combinations of army and civilian clothes, without regard for style, color, or harmony, to which his makeup was strangely insensitive.

The dog tried to climb into his lap, but was gently and firmly pushed to the floor. Al put his foot on Bombo's head to make him understand he was to stay down.

"I'm afraid he's too big and clumsy for an apartment," he said, "meaning no unkindness to the apartment, you understand. He could sleep in the car if he's in your way."

"Let him stay." It was Mary who spoke, but she did not look up. "There's nothing we have here that's so valuable."

Al, watching her, noticed that her skirt was lying slightly above her knees. She glanced up at him briefly, and pulled it down, drawing one leg up underneath her and sitting on it.

"He hasn't any fleas," said Al. "We took a bath together, so now I have the fleas, and he's clean."

"Maybe we should give Bombo the couch and put Al in the car." Fred said.

Mary chose not to be amused, but put her magazine down and looked, first at Fred, then at Al for almost a moment before she spoke. They both were silent, waiting for her to speak. Fred was afraid she was planning to say something blunt

as she often did, and tried to think of a new topic of conversation to divert them. There was always this moment of awkwardness whenever Al first came in.

If Mary had been thinking blunt things she changed her mind, favored each of them with a half-smile, and stood up, straightening the skirt of her dress.

"I think I'll get something to drink," she said, going toward the kitchen. "You boys want anything?"

"I'll have some beer, if there's any left," said Fred after her. "Get some for Al, too, honey." He turned to Al. "Whose presence did you and soulmate Bombo here, brace tonight?" he asked. With Mary gone, the air seemed to clear.

"Oh! I was going to tell you. I had it all planned out to come bursting in on you with flashing eyes, do a pirouette and make my announcement with fanfare. I've got a job."

"Another one?"

"No, man. This is the real thing. I'm going to be a reporter."

"You'd better not do anything that takes too much time," said Fred. "You've got to pass everything this fall or you'll be out on your ear."

"No, Tubby, no more school. The hell with it. This will be a full-time profession." He licked his lips before going on, his eyes brightening.

"You're crazy."

"I knew it, I knew it!" he chorted. "I told Nicky that's what you'd say--exactly those words."

"Al, I defy you to find anyone who knows the circumstances at all who'd be exactly enthusiastic."

"Nicky thought it would be a good idea."

"Except Nicky."

"Nothing wrong with his judgment."

"Of course there's something wrong with it. Nicky's family has money. He can work up his hair-brained schemes, and when he gets tired of them, he can go back to using Mama's car and her pocketbook...you know?"

Mary returned from the kitchen bearing bottles and glasses on a tray. "What's this about Nicky Luce?" she asked.

"He said that the experience would be good for me," continued Al. "After I work a while, maybe I'd come back and get a few more courses."

"What experience?" demanded Mary. "What does Nicky have to do with it?" Al had stood up when she came in, and she set the tray on the hassock, nearly tripping over the dog in doing so.

"Bombo, come here," said Al, going to sit on the sofa. Bombo rose and removed himself to the corner of the room beside the couch. His mouth opened as if by some external force, and he began to pant quietly.

"Al's talking about quitting school to go into newspaper

work," said Fred, helping Mary pour the beer.

"Where? Here in Boston?"

"If you'll let me talk a minute, I'll tell you what the deal would be," Al said, pleased at the furor he had raised in Fred, who was usually unexcitable.

"If it means that you leave school," Mary said, handing him a glass, "it doesn't sound like the right thing."

"Maybe we shouldn't say anything," said Fred remembering himself. "We don't want to butt into your affairs."

"I wouldn't have told you about it, if I hadn't wanted to hear your opinion."

"In that case, I'd say your one job is staying in school and working at it, for once in your life," said Mary. She was sitting in Fred's lap, and seemed less cold toward Al because of it.

"Even if starting reporters get good pay?" Al said in a playfully plaintive tone.

"They don't," she said.

"They get raises quickly."

"It's still the wrong place for you."

"Great future."

"Still no."

"Foreign correspondent...radio commentator...author," he said, waving his hand toward the future.

"You're dreaming, now."

"Well, I'll be hard-headed then. Listen to the cold facts."

"Al, the cold facts are that you nearly flunked out of school last June, and you're running away from it."

"I don't think that's the only reason, Mary," remonstrated Fred. "I've thought reporting might be interesting, too...you know?"

She put her arm around his neck, pulled his head toward her, and kissed him on the forehead. "You old reactionary," she said. "Who would you write for--the National Geographic?"

Fred pulled away from her and adjusted his glasses. "It's not so funny," he said, nettled by her playful condescension, "I might have made a good reporter."

"You would have made a wonderful reporter, dear," she said. She kissed him on the cheek this time, being careful not to touch his glasses. Then she turned to Al who had picked up the magazine. "You were saying?"

"It's all right," he said staring at the page. "Let it go."

"Oh, come now. Don't sulk because we got off the subject for a moment," she said in her sweetest tone. "You were going to tell us the cold facts about your job."

Al half-felt that she was making fun of him. He never knew how to take her or what she said. He had the feeling that she meant he was sulking because they had got away from the

subject of him, which was too close to the truth for consideration. Mary too often informed him exactly what he was thinking, and usually not on flattering terms, and yet it was flattering that she would watch him closely enough to follow his thoughts.

"Well," he said, somewhat deflated, "the cold facts are as yet in outline form."

"You told us you had a job," said Mary. "Now you're going to tell us that you haven't got it yet."

"Wait and let me finish." Al compressed his lips and snorted at her. "No, I haven't got it, yet, but I can get it. I'm positive. Nicky and I had lunch this noon with his uncle who is an editor at Associated Press."

"Who paid?" she asked.

"He did. He was..."

"Did he feed Bombo, too?"

Fred couldn't help snickering at this. Al looked at him appealingly. So much attention and pleasantness from Mary bothered him. She never seemed to be just Fred's wife, but very strongly a woman, and he felt both attracted to and afraid of her.

"Can't you make her shut up?" he said to Fred.

"I'll be good," she promised, wiggling to a straight position and folding her hands meekly on her lap.

"Good. Stay that way," Al said, regaining his composure

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valley below, the mountains were visible in the distance, and
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at the sound of his own words. "This uncle, as I was saying, has contacts with all the smaller New England daily papers, and knows pretty well when there are openings--like now there's a place open for an unexperienced man in Rutland, Vermont. He also said that a small paper like that is the best place to start. He also said," Al repeated quickly as he saw Fred about to speak, "that it doesn't make any material difference whether or not you've been to college, unless it's some place like Columbia School of Journalism."

He stopped. There was a moment of silence. Mary had found a nail file within reach on a table, and was working on her hands. Fred looked at Al thoughtfully for a moment before he spoke.

"You're really going to do it?" he asked finally.

"I think so...Depends."

"You're in for a battle at home...you know?" he added when Al said nothing.

"M," said Al.

"Hadn't you better register for classes before it's too late, just in case?" said Mary, concentrating on the nail file.

"Oh, I already registered," said Al. He was going to add something about irons in the fire, but Mary spoke before he could get it out.

"Why didn't you say so in the first place?" she said. She slid off Fred's lap and went to the radio. "Have you

heard Jack Marr's program?" she asked. "He's had the summer show for the General Paints Hour. Actually, he's not half-bad."

Al took Bombo out, and returned to his temporary bed. When he and the dog came in, he noticed that Mary had put sheets on the sofa, and placed a folded blanket on the chair beside it. The previous nights, she had let him make it up himself.

* * * * *

The heat did not diminish as the night advanced. Lying on the sofa, Al wondered whether the heat was keeping Fred and Mary awake, too. They had long since ceased talking. A street-car rumbled by outside the window. It was the sixth since he had started counting them. As closely as he could reckon it, they passed at intervals of twelve to fifteen minutes in the late hours. He wondered if they ran all night, then assured himself that he had no real desire to find out.

The air was hot and very humid. It smelled like damp, clean clothes in a laundry. The occasional small breeze that moved the curtains behind his head seemed not to be able to surmount the high back of the couch. On the floor by Al's feet, Bombo lay quietly panting. For once, the dog had no desire to sleep on the furniture. Every few minutes, he would cease panting, squirm, settle again with a clink of his collar, sigh through his nose, only to start panting again in a few seconds.

The street, ordinarily noisy during the daytime, was silent except for an occasional passing car, and the streetcars. A man walked by on the far side, his leather heels clicking, each on a different pitch.

Al changed position almost as often as the dog. It was a conventional overstuffed sofa, whose arms at either end did not quite permit him to stretch out at full length. Its heavy, horsehair-filled cushions, even adorned by sheets, lent unwelcome warmth, and an occasional stiff hair pushed through the upholstery and into his flesh. For a while, he diverted himself by running his hands over the cushions and back in quest of hairs, pulling them out, and burning them on his cigarette.

From where he lay, he could see almost the entire length of the apartment in the twilight made by the streetlights. The living-room, dining-room and kitchen were in a straight line, like square boxes pushed together. Between the parlor and the dining-room, were double doors, or rather a double doorway, the doors being long since removed. The couch where Al lay was pushed against the front wall of the parlor, and from it, he could just make out the corner of the stove in the kitchen, where it was being set off to the right of the line of vision.

He wondered where the Mittons stored their spare furniture and belongings, then decided, on second thought, that none of it was stored, considering the profusion of furniture stuffed into the four small rooms.

He put out his cigarette on the ashtray on the floor beside him, considered a trip to the bathroom, and decided against it.

The next thing he remembered, he was awakened by hearing Bombo get up and trot toward the kitchen. Half sitting up, he opened his mouth to call him back, but closed it without saying anything. A light was on in the kitchen. He could hear someone getting a bottle out of the ice-box and setting it on the table.

"Hello, Bombo. You want to go out?" It was Mary's voice, and although she had spoken softly, Al could hear every word in the quiet apartment. The streetlights had gone off, now, making the light from the kitchen seem brighter, but Mary was around the corner, out of sight. Al pulled himself up on the couch and leaned on the arm to get a better view.

Mary in a nightgown, he thought, would be worth seeing. He licked his lips and started to grin, then stopped with a sharply indrawn breath, for as she stepped to open the back door for Bombo he saw that she was naked. She stood there by the door, waiting while Bombo stopped to scratch before going out; then she turned and went back out of sight. He could hear the clink of bottle against glass.

Although he had seen her perfectly plainly, it seemed to Al that she had merely appeared and disappeared again in a fraction of a second. He realized that he was breathing noisily, and opened his mouth to quiet it. He could feel his heart

beating in his throat.

After what seemed at least ten minutes, she again went to the door to let the dog in. She stopped to pat him, then after a few seconds, pushed him toward the front of the house and snapped off the light.

For a moment, Al strained his eyes into the dark without seeing anything, then gradually he became aware that Mary was standing in the doorway to the dining-room looking in toward him. In the darkness, he could see her only as a tall pale blur, yet the consciousness of her nearness, and the very indistinctness, made her presence more exciting to him than when she had been in the lighted kitchen.

The time between streetcars seemed short in comparison to the time she stood there. Once he thought she was coming in. His heart beat even more loudly, and he was conscious of the perspiration running down the side of his face onto his neck. The arm of the couch was hot and uncomfortable on his side, but he dared not move. Then she turned away and disappeared into the bedroom.

Slipping down onto the couch he lay with his hands braced behind his head. The sheets had grown cool--he was acutely aware of them against his own body. It was not until five minutes afterward that he realized that his head and bare shoulders had been plainly visible to her, outlined against the window. The realization snapped upon him like the sudden memory of a forgotten errand. He could feel the heat of his face reddening in the darkness.

CHAPTER 5

Julie, sitting sprawled over the two splintered wooden front steps of her cabin, half-closed her eyes and laid her head back against the tarpapered wall, warmed by the midmorning sun. She could feel the heat of it through her hair. Last night it had suddenly turned cold, but the coming of the sun and its penetrating heat made the morning feel more like early spring than fall.

Deep, slow heat. She stretched herself out at full length and let the warmth seep into her clothing, into her skin; the sun through her eyelids a blood-red, followed by shapeless blur upon blur of bright purple, lavender, orange. She opened her eyes a slit.

No one was in sight. The cabins had all been battened down for the winter, like ships for a storm. The browned grass, flattened by thousands of sneakered feet, seared so dry it almost crackled, stuck up in unruly tufts here and there like unkempt hair.

Across the stillness, broken only by the faint, monotonous buzz of insects, Julie could hear the stentorian voice of Miss Duffy in the dining hall directing the men--"you, there, go ask Oscar (he's the bald one) for some mops"--as she had directed the closing of the cabins, the storage of mattresses, the removal of the raft and wharf, as she would have directed

the drainage of the lake, if that had been possible. "Lunch will be served in the kitchen," she said, "the dining hall has to be closed up while we still have the men." Julie wondered what Miss Duffy would be in charge of after today. She just couldn't live unless she were in charge of something.

She closed her eyes again, thankful that it was Saturday, thankful for the sun, hopeful of Albie's quick arrival. Since Thursday night, she had been living out of her trunk, idle and restless, but this morning even restlessness seemed unreal; time and space were temporarily suspended in a limbo of warmth and somnolent sunlight.

The motor of a car sounded faintly in the distance. Albie had written about a car--"I have purchased what may be best described as an automobile, and will, God willing, arrive for you on the 9th." The sound of the motor died away--probably the truck that the working crew had brought.

Since yesterday noon she had had the cabin--most of the camp in fact--to herself. Somehow she had not heard, or hadn't been told--this morning it didn't seem to matter which--that after Friday at five her time was her own. Jean Brophy had offered her a ride back to Boston, but Fran would have been along so she had refused, saying that her brother was coming. By yesterday noon the camp had been deserted except for Miss Duffy and the workmen.

Hearing something in the grass by her feet, she opened

her eyes again. There stood a large awkward-looking dog who saw her at the same time she saw him.

"Hello," she said. "Where did you come from?"

The dog sat down, and with a lanky hind leg made two or three half-hearted passes at an itching ear, then slowly relaxed to a position of collapse on the ground.

"Well," she said, reaching down to scratch the offending ear, "you're not only ugly-you're lazy." She twisted his collar around, but found no name on it. Just as she was about to look around for his possible owner, she was startled by a voice not two feet away.

"Boo," said the voice.

"Albie!" she shouted, jumping up and throwing her arms around him.

"I come thousands of arduous miles to rescue you from your wilderness of hungry trees and stately females, and you insult my dog, my best friend," he said. "How are you? You look well."

"Oh, Albie, you do too. When did you get the dog--or rather where? When did you get here? Have you been home yet? Where's your car?"

Her brother looked at her, amused. "Yes," he said.

"I'll ask you all that later. Let's just get out of here. You don't know how glad I am to see you."

"Where are all these girls you wrote about? I expected

to be swarmed by large numbers of..."

"Home." She cut him short and went into the cabin, calling to him over her shoulder that he'd hear all about it and to help her with her bags, praying that for once he'd forget his game of lethargy, and would hurry.

"Where's the car? she asked.

"Over behind those trees," he said. "Shall I bring it here, or do we carry the stuff to it?"

"Oh, you can't bring it here; Miss Duffy would..." she stopped and looked at him, grinning. "Can you get it in here?" she asked. "Is it very big?

"Not very."

"Then bring it. And hurry--I'll have my stuff ready to throw in."

Without a word, he turned and disappeared outside. She heard him whistle to the dog, who bounced to his feet and followed. Quickly she grabbed her two duffle bags and tossed them out the door and, kneeling on her trunk, struggled to make the hasps reach. By the time she had it closed and strapped she could hear him coming, racing the engine, snapping bushes as he made his own road between the trees. Miss Duffy'll have a fit, she thought gleefully as she dragged the trunk out the door and down the steps.

When the car broke in the clearing, Julie wondered what her brother's idea of a very big car would be. It was a

Cadillac, a very old Cadillac--fifteen years at least--a tremendous convertible sedan, with two tremendous spare wheels sunk into tire-wells in the front fenders. It could have comfortably carried nine or ten persons, but its squareness and the fact that its top was down, made it look at least twice as big. It had been recently repainted a lustrous blue which, along with all its highly polished chromium decoration, gleamed brightly in the sun. Instead of driving quietly to where Julie stood, Al made a large, noisy, dusty circle half way around the campus and back to where Julie stood, lurching to a stop not two inches away from her trunk.

"I had to do it," he said opening the door and stretching his legs out. "It takes a lot of room to turn around."

Out of the corner of her eye, Julie could see Miss Duffy, fire in her eye, emerging from the dining hall.

"Hurry, Albie," she said nervously. "Here comes trouble."

He leaped out and scooped up the two duffle bags in one motion. Before Miss Duffy had come twenty determined steps nearer, the bags, trunk, Julie, and Bombo were all in the tonneau and they were roaring toward the opening in the trees. Julie waved good-bye to Miss Duffy who did not return the favor, but stopped and glared, arms akimbo. Then she and the camp were left behind and they were on the road home. Julie crawled over into the front seat beside Al.

If this were not my brother, she thought, I'd make him my

husband. Aloud she said, "You're a fast man, Albert."

"What did Miss Duffy ever do to you?" he asked, letting off the throttle. "You make me feel like a commando effecting a rescue from a concentration camp."

"It doesn't seem to matter, now that I'm away from it." She sighed and smiled at once, relaxing in the seat. The wind toying with her hair and the noise of the engine made it seem to her almost like flying. "Mm," she said, "leather seats."

"This car had every luxury known to man--twenty years ago," he said, exaggerating slightly. "I wonder what mother will make of it. When is she coming back--tonight?"

"Gee, I forgot to ask her. I called her up last Sunday, but I didn't think to ask about it."

"Called her up?" he asked.

"I was frantic, Albie. I wanted to have her call you and get you to bring me home right then."

"She would have had trouble finding me. I was in Cambridge staying with Tubby Mitton and his wife."

"You were? I thought you were going to work 'til yesterday."

"I would have, but I sort of--should we say resigned under protest?"

"You mean you got fired?" She started to giggle. "When?"

"What's so funny about that?" he demanded. "It was very tragic for a couple of days."

Julie realized he was hurt and briefly explained what had happened, and how her mother had used him as inspiration to stick it out this last week. "It just struck me funny that you were home all the time," she said, wondering as she spoke if she were making him more uncomfortable, but he seemed not to mind.

"I'm glad she had enough faith in me to use me as a good example," he said after a moment's thought. "Actually, aren't you glad you stayed? At least you've got two hundred bucks to show for it."

"Plus thirteen," she amended. "How much did you save?"

He hung his head in mock shame.

"At least you have a car and a dog," she said consolingly.

He sighed. "Bombo came free, and the car didn't cost very much. It's gas and oil and parts that are so expensive. This baby has an appetite like a rhinoceros."

"Hasn't Bombo?"

"He isn't so fussy. He seems to have been a garbage-hound since birth."

The conversation lapsed. Julie watched the scenery for a few minutes. Funny how much more beautiful it is when you're just riding through, she thought. Her stomach rumbled, changing her interest from trees, valleys and rivers to the various eating places along the road, but nothing wholesome-looking revealed itself. She turned to examining the inside of the

car, its profusion of dials and meters on the dashboard, the little pockets on the doors--the one beside her contained a whisk-broom--wondering if she would be allowed to drive, and deciding to ask at a more opportune moment. She looked at her brother. "A penny," she said.

"My thoughts?" He grinned. "I was thinking lewdly about your Jean Brophy."

"You wouldn't like her," Julie said quickly.

"I wasn't thinking in terms of myself. I was thinking in relation to you."

"Lewdly?"

"Don't be difficult...you said she'd been out all night and apparently thought nothing about it. I wondered how much else went on in girls' camps that you'd missed."

"I'm not that dumb," she said defensively. "She probably was out sleeping with somebody, if that's what you mean, but that sort of thing didn't happen much--not with Miss Duffy on guard."

"It happens a lot more than you think."

"It couldn't have, Albie. You were watched every minute."

"I don't mean at your camp, especially. I was thinking of a survey I read about how few girls, but especially how few guys are virgins, and comparing it to the people I know. I can't think of any one of my friends who hasn't slept with

a girl--except maybe Tubby Mitton before he married Mary."

"They're a funny combination," Julie said. "He was always so drab and Mary's so sexy. I always wonder why he married that kind of girl."

"Poor Tubby didn't have much choice, once she decided she wanted him. That's the real question--why did she want him?"

"I think he'd make a good husband," said Julie musingly. "He's no Romeo, but he works hard and he'll be successful. A woman wants more than sex in marriage."

Her brother looked at her, amused. "What every woman wants..." he began. "You're too young yet. You may want security and all that, but don't underestimate sex."

"And don't overestimate it, either," she added. "You can say what you like about surveys and polls, but a lot of my girl-friends don't sleep around."

"I was thinking of males."

"Oh." Julie sat quietly several minutes, wondering whether Albie included himself among the unchaste, but she didn't dare ask him, so she put the question obliquely. "What do you think about it?" she asked.

"About what?" He had been concentrating on passing an oil truck which had been annoying him on the hills.

"Sleeping with people," she said, a bit embarrassed at being forced to say it again.

"Oh...I'd almost forgotten about it, you were quiet so long...It's up to the individual, I suppose, I developed a theory about it over the summer. I've felt the same way for quite a while, but it's just recently that I've gotten it clear enough in my mind to put into words...Did you ever wonder what happens to people when they go away?"

"Go away?" Julie didn't see what this had to do with anything. "Go away where?" she asked.

"Anywhere--out of sight--the next room--a thousand miles--doesn't matter."

"I don't know, don't they just go away?" said Julie, more puzzled than before.

"No, it's more than that."

"Well, where do they go, then?"

"They die," he said.

He seemed to feel that he had scored a great triumph, but it was lost on Julie. She was a little annoyed with him for being so abstruse--so smugly mysterious. "I don't see the point," she said. People obviously didn't die the minute they got out of sight.

"Let's take it from another angle," he said. "Let me use a concrete example. Take this car, then. It doesn't exist, it isn't real unless I'm here to see it or feel it, or smell it."

"So what?"

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"Don't you understand yet? Look...what I said about this car applies to people dying; it applies to everything. The center of the Earth is where I am--the center of everything. Time began when I was born and it will end when I die. Everything centers in me. You die when I can't see you, as you'll die along with the rest of the universe when I die."

"That's for you," Julie agreed, catching on, "but it works the same for me, too." He explained all this as though he were dictating a recipe for a cake, and it upset Julie's sense of importance.

"Aha!" he said. "That's where you're wrong. When you say I die from your point of view, I can understand it. I can see how you feel, but I can't believe it, seeing that I'm the center of the universe."

"I'm hungry," said Julie, and noticing that the Center of the Universe was offended by such an irrelevancy, she added, "What does that have to do with what we started with?"

"That depends on where we started." He frowned. "You made me forget."

"It started with Jean. I asked you what you thought about people sleeping together."

They were in Plymouth by this time. Al pulled up and parked in front of the first restaurant he saw, shut off the engine, and stretched his arms and legs. "You mean, have I slept with anyone?" he said.

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"Yes." She looked at her feet.

"Certainly."

Julie pondered the proper response for blunt answers to blunt questions, and found no retort in her mental catalogue. She hated to ask who the girl was, yet her curiosity piqued her. She wondered if he would ask about her.

Al leaned over the back seat and tied Bombo securely despite the dog's distress. "It was nobody you know," he said over his shoulder. "Girls in Europe...Let us go in and stuff ourselves royally."

As they ate, Julie watched her brother, envying his self-confidence which he wore instead of nice looking clothes. Funny, she thought, how you never noticed his clothes; it was his face you noticed. He had a big athletic body--never employed in athletics except during the brief periods when his philosophy changed momentarily to require physical exercise, which he then practiced with stern determination but it was still the face that always struck you. He looked so different from Julie and her mother, like somebody else's child. She could still remember the girl next door telling her, when they were kids, that Albie was adopted because he looked so different--the dark skin and light hair, just the opposite of Julie's.

Everything about his face was different from hers--his brown eyes and the clean lines of it, as though someone had

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drawn him with a sharp pencil; his small ears close to his head, and especially his mouth...At least, Julie thought, they could have given me his mouth. Very strongly masculine, he rigorously kept his hair clipped short and was still embarrassed about his baby pictures where he had had long, yellow curls.

As he ate, he continued his discussion at great length, decreeing that the behavior of the individual, on the basis of his theory, needed only to include the golden rule--"If I hurt other people, I'm hurting myself, because I know how everyone else feels...How?...I'd feel the same way if anyone else did whatever it was to me." Julie stopped trying to follow the individual points, but did understand that here was the answer to all world's troubles, if only everyone would see the light.

"It would be as easy as that," he said snapping his fingers under her nose. "There'd be no more need for Churches or police force or army--no wars--Paradise." He stopped and frowned. "I just remembered something," he said. "Paradise... I meant to tell Mother, or ask her rather."

"Paradise?" Julie asked.

"Clifton Paradise--that's a guy I worked with this summer. He's transferring to City College this fall, and he wants to stay with us until he can find some place to live, and I sort of told him he could."

"Albie, can I drive home--part of the way at least?"

He looked at her absently, thinking of Clifton Paradise. Bringing home a large dog would be fairly simple, but he knew his mother would be sure to find objections to a guest, especially when the year was just getting started. At least, he reflected, Cliff would make a good impression on Mother. Cliff always made a good impression on everybody.

"Can I Albie?" Julie repeated. "I'd drive very carefully."

"Sure," he said. "Sure."

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CHAPTER 6

When Julie and Al pulled up into their driveway in Cambridge at 9:30 that evening they were surprised to see lights burning in the house.

"Mother must be home," Al said through a yawn. "The Suttons left yesterday."

Julie opened her eyes sleepily. She had given up driving with the advent of darkness and had been dozing the last half-hour. "I never would have thought that shaggy old barn could be so beautiful," she said.

The size of the house had long been a standing joke between them. It had eleven big rooms, counting the kitchen, far too much space for four people--now three--who were seldom home all at once, but twenty years ago Mr. Manthorne had bought it with good reason. He had been an only child, and had always dreamed of a big house and a big family of his own. After his wife had nearly died in childbirth with Julia he clung to the house determinedly, refusing to allow his dream to vanish altogether.

After his death, the children and most of Mrs. Manthorne's friends had advised her to sell it, but she had stubbornly refused, feeling vaguely that everyone was banding together against her. She said that the market was not right, that she wanted to keep a home for the children, that she

could never find another place as handy to all her patients, that it was actually not expensive to keep, and less frequently that it was the only tangible memory of her husband that she had left.

Mr. Manthorne had died five years ago; the house had been dead for at least twenty-five years. Houses have a life span just as people do. New houses are like young children, immature and fresh and clean, and as they are lived in they gradually come to have poise and dignity. Old houses...sometimes they mellow, gaining distinction and character like the wrinkled faces and hands of very old men...sometimes they die; the wood greys and shrinks, the doors fall askew, the porches sag, and the windows are broken by little boys with slingshots.

The Manthorne's house had died in middle age, only no one had realized it--they kept trying to bring it back to life. All the rooms were tremendously high with dull brown woodwork and rusty green gas fixtures which no one had bothered to remove after electricity came in. Julie had tried to lighten her room with flowery wallpaper and frilly curtains but the result was a pathetic sterility rather than delicacy.

It always seemed cold in the house, even in the summer, except perhaps in the kitchen. If any room had a spark of life left, it was the kitchen. Big and airy, it had a coal range as well as a gas stove. The yellow and black checkered linoleum floor gave it a home-like brightness.

As you walked around in the house you were conscious of all the once-luxurious items that accentuated the atmosphere of decay and lifelessness--the tremendous, dust-catching balustrade on the front staircase, whose carved newell post was bigger than a man, the "maid's stairway" in back which led not only to the second, but the third floor, the closets in the second floor bedrooms, so big they each had a window and a little copper sink with running water.

The front bedroom on the second floor, because of its fireplace, had been converted to a library-study by Mr. Manthorne, and was still referred to as Father's Room. If the rest of the house seemed brittle and lifeless this gave an impression of comfortable living and warm somnolence. Mr. Manthorne had had carved walnut book cases built in, covering every available inch of wall space, except for a section above the fireplace where a thick, dark wall rug was hung depicting a scene from Venice where great classical buildings dwarfed the gondolas and tiny human figures. In the center of the rug was a building which always looked to the children like the State House in Boston. A dull gleaming red mahogany desk was perfectly matched by a deep mahogany-colored rug, and mahogany-colored curtains which kept out most of the daylight.

Nothing about the room had been changed since Mr. Manthorne's death. No one was allowed to clean it except Mrs. Manthorne, with the result that it was dusty more often than

not. If a book was taken from the shelves, it was done with Mrs. Manthorne's permission and a reiterated admonition that it should be returned to its proper niche. The left bottom drawer in the desk was entirely sacred. No human hand had disturbed it, except for the time Mrs. Manthorne had placed a piece of paper upon its contents bearing the words, "Please do not move anything in this drawer under any circumstances."

During the summer while the house had been rented, the door to Father's Room had been locked.

Originally the house had been set back in a spacious lawn, but the extra land had been sold when taxes kept rising, until now the house and garage left only a token lawn at the front, and barely room in back to hang out a week's laundry.

For the last ten miles of the trip, Al had been fighting to keep awake. Now that they were home, he lay back in his seat and proceeded directly to fall asleep. Julie shook him gently.

"Come on," she said. "You'll feel better if you get in to bed."

They climbed out of the car, each taking a part of her luggage, and went up on the piazza, Julie reached the front door first, but Al called softly to her to wait.

"Let's send the dog in and see what she makes of him," he said.

They opened the door quietly and pushed Bombo inside,

but he stopped halfway, his tail slapping noisily against the door and the wall.

"Go on, Stupid," said Al giving him a push. He was now just inside the door himself, and suddenly realized that his mother was standing beside him in the darkness. Then all at once, she and Julie were in each other's arms and Bombo was jumping up on the two of them barking. Al put his arms around both of them for a short embarrassed second and went on into the house with the dog. He wanted to ask about Paradise before he forgot it, but decided it would be more tactful to wait a few minutes.

"How long have you been home?" he called to his mother.

"I got in this afternoon," she said following him into the living room and sinking wearily onto the couch.

"Your stuff still in town?"

"No. I took a taxi from the station."

"From Boston?" he said raising an eyebrow.

"I was so tired, Albert. I thought it would be better to spend the money than to get sick."

Jesus, he thought. He was about to mention his own fatigue when Julie interrupted his thoughts.

"Hey!" she said. "It's so clean in here. They took good care of the house, didn't they."

Deciding to make a special effort to be patient with his mother Al swallowed his comment about his long, arduous trip,

and headed toward the kitchen. "Any food around?" he asked.

"I don't know. I've hardly looked." Mrs. Manthorne said. "I went up and went to sleep as soon as I got in."

Al stopped in the dining-room doorway without turning around. "You could have called up Hackett's and had them send up some stuff," he said.

Mrs. Manthorne's deep sigh irritated him more than it drew any sympathy. He and Julie had not eaten since one-thirty, and it would have taken so little effort merely to have lifted up the receiver, a theme on which he was mentally composing a new cadenza of indignation. Again Julie stopped him.

"Why don't you look around in the kitchen before you blow your top," she said. "If there's nothing there, there'll be some canned things in the cellar store room."

"If you had given me a chance, I was about to say the same thing," Mrs. Manthorne called after him as he disappeared into the kitchen muttering something about milk, butter, and eggs under his breath. They could hear him slam the door of the icebox and then go down the cellar stairs. They were both quiet for a minute. From underneath their feet came the sound of Al dropping several cans on the cement floor.

"He's trying to carry up the whole works in one load," Julie said.

"Sometimes," said Mrs. Manthorne looking straight ahead into the empty fireplace, "you children seem to assume that I

lie back and let all the work fall on you, when my whole life is devoted to trying to help you both. You always jump to conclusions before I can say anything." Before Julie could say yes-Mother, she added in the same tone, "How did your last week at camp go, dear?"

"Okay, I guess. It's a good thing I did stay--did Albie tell you that he's been fired and was here in Cambridge all last week?"

"Oh, was he?" Mrs. Manthorne's face showed concern. "Where did he live? I'll bet he hasn't had a decent meal all week. I should have called Hackett's, I suppose, but I didn't know when you'd be in..."

"I told you it would be tonight, Mother."

"I couldn't remember, anyway, and I knew there were things in the cellar."

At this point Al returned, barely able to see over the load of cans in his arms. "Help," he said.

"Leave them in the kitchen, silly," said his sister going to help him unload. He grinned.

"Wait until you see the cellar," he said. "The Suttons may have cleaned the house, but I don't think they put the rubbish out all summer. You can hardly move down there. I almost broke my neck trying to find the light."

"Oh dear," said Mrs. Manthorne getting up wearily. "I'd better go look."

"All you'll see is a bunch of junk," Al called after her, but she was determined to look for herself. He and Julie followed her as far as the kitchen to deposit the cans in the pantry.

"You might have waited until tomorrow," Julie said.

"I know," he said. "I realized as soon as I spoke that she wouldn't see anything funny about it. Now she's upset for the night, and I was hoping to warn her about Cliff's coming."

"That's your problem," Julie said. She handed him a can of beans to open and blowing the dust off its mate, placed it on the shelf. "I was hoping she'd get herself rested for once, but she's tired already."

"She probably lived up at Condescending Manor like she does here--on toast and tea and four-hours-a-night-sleep."

"She's awfully quiet down there," said Julie. "I have a suspicion that it might be tactful to go down."

"Go ahead. I've seen it once. I'll put the beans on."

"Come." She took the can from his hands and towed him to the cellar door.

As they reached the foot of the stairs, Julie saw that her brother had understated the case, if anything. Even when it was tidy, the cellar space was apt to be mostly taken up with stored furniture, the workbench, and boxes of Mrs. Manthorne's old treasures--toys, letters, and the like. Now she had almost to guess where the floor was. Everywhere she

looked was rubbish--the five ash barrels were full of it, cardboard cartons and wooden boxes of junk were piled on top of each other, and it appeared that, for the last two weeks, the summer occupants had merely stood at the top of the stairs and tossed down cans, boxes and papers. Mrs. Manthorne was standing in the middle of it all with a distracted expression, like Little Eva among the ice floes.

"They seem to have gotten the wrong idea because they found the barrels in the cellar," said Al ruefully. "Can't you sue people like that?"

"Where did they get it all? The more you look at it, the worse it gets," said Julie in an awed tone.

"Do you suppose you could get the worst of it out?" Mrs. Manthorne asked her son.

"I suppose I'll have to," he said.

"I'll go up and get some supper," she said. "It will be ready for you by the time you're finished."

"Oh, Mother! Not tonight." He glanced at his mother. She was biting her lip. "Don't worry, it'll get out."

"Please, Albert," she said, starting up the stairs.

"Don't cross me tonight. I'm too tired."

"Tomorrow, Mother...first thing in the morning. It wouldn't even matter if I left it a couple of days. They don't collect until Tuesday."

"Put it out in the back yard, then. It's liable to

cause a fire."

Julie found it hard to follow this kind of reasoning.

"How?" she asked.

"The furnace, there."

"The furnace has no fire in it," Al pointed out in a caustic tone.

"I don't mean the furnace...the gas thing." She pointed to the cylindrical tank in the corner. "The hot water heater. You knew what I meant."

"Don't be ridiculous, Mother. One more night won't hurt it," Al said. He was holding his temper with difficulty.

"I can't sleep with all this in the cellar. That's all there is to it," said Mrs. Manthorne. She sat down on the third step and leaned her head against the plaster wall.

Al said nothing, but made his way around her and went up the stairs. When neither of them made any motion to follow him he stopped on the top step. "Look," he said, "I'm just as tired as you are. I've driven 300 miles today, and I've still got to get my stuff from the Mittons' before they go to bed. I've said I'd do it in the morning, and I will...If either of you wants to come, you can." He waited for an answer, got none, and went on upstairs.

"Why don't you come, Mother?" said Julie after a moment.

"The ride would relax you."

Mrs. Manthorne only shook her head. A little of the

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white plaster from the wall rubbed off on her hair. A large tear ran down her face, but she made no effort to wipe it off.

"I'll go with him and get him to hurry back," said Julie after another awkward moment. She patted her mother's shoulder and went up after Al. By the time she reached the front door, he was already backing into the street and she had to yell for him to wait.

"Mother coming?" he asked, holding the door open for her. She shook her head.

He made a jack-rabbit start almost before she was in the seat, the force of the sudden forward motion jolting her door closed with a slam, which with the roar of the engine, gave her a small vicarious share of his emotion. Mother did that to you. You couldn't reason with her or yell at her--it didn't work, so you went out and kicked the hell out of your engine instead. Julie noticed he was heading away from the Mittons', but thought it better not to ask about it yet--it was probably an excuse, anyway. Even when he's mad, he's tactful, she thought. If it had been me, I never would have asked her to come along. She slid down in her seat, watching the sky over the top of the windshield. There were too many streetlights and electric signs around to see many stars, but a calm, full moon was visible now and then, as little silver-cruised clouds blew across its face. There was a faint trace of ocean smell in the fresh wind.

A traffic light forced Al to stop, fuming because there were no other cars in sight. "Why the hell do they leave the stupid things on this late. Not another damn car in sight," he yelled at her as though she were personally responsible for it. "Mule!"

"Traffic lights?" Julie asked.

"No--Mother. She's so goddamned unreasonable. She gets an idea in her head and it sticks like peanut butter."

"You should try to be more patient with her," said Julie, carefully choosing a phrase to help him blow off steam. It worked.

"For Chrisake!" he yelled. "There's plenty of times when you get mad at her, too. I thought I was being rather calm under the circumstances. There's no earthly reason that that stuff should go out tonight." His tone changed to a mincing imitation of his mother's tired-tone. "I just can't sleep with all these things down here. They may come to life and drink up all the oil."

"Don't be ridiculous," yelled Julie over the motor, as they roared away from the light. All four tires squealed loudly as the car swung heavily around a sharp corner. "There is no oil to be drank--drunk. We burn coal."

"You're picking my words to pieces," he shouted back, his voice hardly audible. He kept it in second gear as they picked up speed. A little frightened, Julie watched the

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speedometer needle creep up to thirty-five. Then all at once there was a muffled explosion directly under her feet. Startled, she jumped to a sitting position, and when she looked at Al, he was laughing at her. He coasted to a stop, gunning the motor which sounded much louder and closer than it had before.

"What was it?" Julie shouted.

"I don't know exactly. I think the tin can blew off the exhaust pipe. Sounds like a diesel, doesn't it?" He stepped on the accelerator again, pleased at the noise he was creating, then shut it off. Fishing a flashlight from the pocket on his door, he got out and crawled under the running-board on her side. Julie leaned over in an effort to see.

"Is it what you thought?" she asked.

"Yup."

"A tin can?" she said dubiously.

"It's--phoo!" He slid out and sat up rubbing his mouth on his sleeve. "It's dirty under there--yeah, there was a big hole in the exhaust pipe, between the engine and the muffler, that had a tin can wired over it. The pressure must have blown it off."

"Can you fix it?"

"I could, but I don't think I will. I like the sound." He climbed back into the driver's seat and started the engine again, racing it, then letting it idle. When he let his foot up, it seemed almost to breathe in. "It literally purrs," he

said delightedly. "Hear it? It inhales and exhales." He glanced around at the quiet apartment houses, then gleefully pressed the accelerator to the floor, Julie put her fingers in her ears.

"Come on," he bellowed pulling her in, "before we get pinched for disturbing the peace," and they were off once more, every explosion from the big engine distinctly and separately audible. Al crouched over the wheel in his best racing driver manner, grinning as several boys on a street corner stared at them. His impatience with his mother completely gone, now.

He was still not going toward the Mittons', but in a big circle that now headed them in the general direction of home.

"Have Fred and Mary moved?" Julie asked.

"No, I'm not going. It's too late now, and my stuff can stay there until tomorrow." Then almost sheepishly he added, "I may as well take out the worst of that junk for Mother. It will only take a few minutes." He stopped in front of a drugstore.

"I'll help you," Julie offered.

"Good...I've got to get some cigarettes. Come on in and have a Coke and a sandwich."

As Al drove Julie back to the house, he felt genuinely penitent. Seeing that he was going to do the job in the end, he was sorry that he had been obstinate, especially on the first night home. He remembered what he had told himself when he was

discharged from the Army and had decided to remain in Boston to finish school--"If I want to live peacefully with Mother, I've got to put up with her vagaries--either that or go back to Ohio State."

As they drove into the yard, however, the headlights caught something that made him forget his conciliatory train of thought. At the edge of the front walk were two of the barrels of rubbish and a carton. Forgetting his sister, he jumped out, only to trip over Bombo who had come out to greet him. Angrily he pushed him aside, looked toward the sidewalk to convince himself of what he had seen, then stalked toward the back of the house. At the cellar bulkhead he met his mother who was in the process of bringing up an ash can, one step at a time. She was wearing her oldest, most threadbare black coat, her hair was ruffled and wispy, and on her face was a look of last-ditch desperation. When she saw Al standing above her she avoided his look, and with what appeared to be the last of her strength, lifted the barrel another step.

For a minute he just stood there closing and opening his fists, his face hot. For the first time in his life, he felt like striking his mother. A furious uncontrollable anger filled him.

"Put that God Damned thing down!" he snarled, and in one bound he was down beside her, ripping the barrel from her hands, and heaving it outside where it crashed on its side, spilling

out its contents. Mrs. Manthorne was knocked off balance, and barely saved herself from going down six feet backwards onto the cement floor. She was not crying now, but looked at him with that same expression of hurt desperation.

Al was breathing heavily. "Now get the hell upstairs and stay there," he shouted, and as Julie appeared above him he added, "both of you."

Without a word or an expression, his mother left. He did not move until he heard her close the inside door at the top of the stairs.

"Do you..." Julie began.

"Please, Julie!" His tone was almost pleading. "Go away...I'll just get mad at you too."

"Okay, okay," she said. "I just thought you might want something to eat."

"No." He turned his back on her, then as her footsteps died away he shouted, "Thank you." He sat down on the steps for a minute to light a cigarette, his hands shaking violently. After a moment he stood up, pulled off his shirt and started furiously to work, determined to clean the cellar as it had not been cleaned since they had lived there. So she wanted a clean cellar...he'd get every scrap of paper and dust out of there if he had to work until morning.

The physical exercise calmed him after a few minutes, but the feeling of frustration persisted. Mother was using

unfair tactics to get her own way. He estimated as closely as he could the time he had been gone--about twenty minutes, twenty-five at the most. She had put out two barrels and one rather small box in that time...not very fast for one who wanted a clean cellar. Was she counting on his coming back? What would she have done if he hadn't returned in time to help? "It's not fair," he kept saying to himself. "She had no right to force me to do things by making me sorry for her. It's her fault I got mad. I know exactly what she'll say, too--'Albert, if you'd only do what I ask you to, there'd be no trouble at all'--but it's not reasonable." He stopped and looked around the cellar at the odds and ends she had saved for years--a baby carriage, several boxes of moth-eaten baby clothes, his father's old roll-top desk--useless stuff to them. Why didn't she give it to somebody who could use it if she really wanted to eliminate her fire hazard? He stooped to sweep up some broken glass he had spilled on the floor in his haste, and noticed that his hands were still shaking.

It was after midnight when he was finally finished. He had not only taken out the rubbish, but tidied the worst of the stored stuff and sprinkled and swept the floor. He carefully closed and locked all the cellar doors and windows, turned out the lights, and felt his way up through the darkened house toward the third floor which he had to himself. As he passed his mother's door, he saw a crack of light coming

from under it. She called to him, but he passed by without answering. As he reached the third floor, he heard his sister's voice from below.

"Albie?" she called softly.

He stopped, holding the railing in the darkness. "What is it?" he said.

"Mother wants to know if you'll take us to Church in the morning."

"No," he said. He waited until he heard her door close, then made his way into his bedroom. When he snapped on the light he saw that his bed was freshly made and turned down. On the table beside it stood a glass of tomato juice, a plate of crackers and preserved ham, and some cold beans.

"For Christ's sake," he muttered. "Who did that?"

CHAPTER 7

It was Monday morning, Fred Mitton sat at the kitchen table absorbed in a Graduate School catalogue, absently stirring his coffee with his free hand. Mary, alternating between bacon on the stove and the toaster on the table, was listening to the radio which she had brought into the kitchen. She would have liked to talk, but at the moment the catalogue held precedence, so she was listening to the Early Bird who was alternately playing records and calling people up to ask them a five-dollar question.

Fred had a singleness of purpose to a degree that had come to be almost offensive to Mary. When he was engaged in reading or writing or even manual labor, it took all his attention. He seemed hardly to know she was around on such occasions, and to be mentally shelved like a salt shaker is annoying when you're practically still a bride. Not that Fred couldn't be thoughtful or helpful--he often was, but even his attentions to her were given with that same deliberate concentration. When the salt came off the shelf it was used, wiped, and put back, so to speak.

As a consequence, Mary had the radio on a little louder than was necessary, knowing nevertheless that Fred didn't hear it. "Who was the first vice-president to die in office?...You don't know?...I'm awfully sorry, Mrs. McEvoy, but we'll send

to you one Hartly Toothbrush-and-Paste set for your cooperation." This was followed by a record on which a verse-speaking choir chanted the virtues of homogenized light bulbs, guaranteed to give an even, slow-burning light, twenty percent longer.

Fred read on.

Then the telephone rang in the living-room. Mary turned down the radio. Tapping Fred on the shoulder, she made a dumb show to indicate that he was not to allow the toast to burn and went in to answer it, wiping her hands on her apron. When she came back Fred was still reading.

"Who was it?" he asked without looking up.

"Our boy." She extracted two smoking pieces of bread from the toaster and waved them under his nose indignantly. His smile was forgiving. "It was Al," she repeated. "He apologizes profusely--his own words--for leaving his belongings here so long and promises to come and take them away this morning if anyone will be here."

"I won't," said Fred. "I've got to go in to school for several things and I could never get back in time."

"Who's talking about you? I'll be here. To hear you, you'd think you lived here all alone," she said. Then as he showed signs of returning to the catalogue--"What's going on at school?"

"Oh, nothing. I'm just changing a course and picking up

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a few things, that's all." He leafed over several pages and started to read again.

Mary was nettled, half at herself for wanting more attention, and half at Fred for not giving it. For the past week or more she had found herself quite constantly on the verge of impatience, and now that Al was gone she was forced to realize that her impatience was with Fred.

At the moment she couldn't have said what was bothering her. If she had pursued the subject further, Fred would have been willing enough to tell her what course he was changing, or any of his plans--but he never would have thought to tell her unasked. She almost wished he were a little like Al, who would come in and pour forth a dozen schemes at once even though he would never carry them out.

Fred just wasn't romantic. No one could deny that. He was steady and a good worker--even thoughtful in most ways... Perhaps you weren't supposed to look for romance after a year and a half...but if he would only be a little imaginative...for example, take a week before last when he told her about his new job.

He had come in for supper as calmly as though nothing had happened. If he felt any emotion or elation he showed no sign of it, but in the middle of supper with a mouthful of mashed potatoes and hamburg, casually mentioned that he'd be teaching in Hartford after he graduated in January--as he would

have offered her a second helping or asked her to sew on a button. Mary wasn't even sure she had heard him rightly between the full mouth and the nature of the announcement.

Her first reaction to the news was joy and pride in Fred, but suddenly she felt let down at not having been allowed to share in the excitement of the anticipation--the feeling of being in his confidence. He saw she was hurt without understanding why and, according to his custom, waited for her to explain, but the explanation was not quickly forthcoming. Not until he accused her of lack of enthusiasm, did she break down. There was a scene. She wept. He promised to do better and she knew he would--literally, The next time he was job-hunting he would make a point to tell her about it in advance but now that he was going in to do a small thing like changing a course, he was as taciturn as ever. He saw no connection between the two. Mary sighed, taking pains to make it an inward sigh. There would be no point in saying anything now.

Fred closed the course catalogue, folded his napkin, and left the kitchen to get his suit coat. As he was leaving, Mary went out to kiss him good-bye. The kiss made her feel better, but just as Fred was going out the door he stopped, a half grin on his face, and said, "You'd better get out of those pajamas and into a dress before Al comes. I don't want my sensual friends appreciating my absence too much....You know?" Then he was gone.

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Mary stood there until she heard him go down the porch steps, then went to the window and watched him get on a street-car at the corner, wondering whether his remark were anything more than a passing comment. He was very seldom sarcastic, and even more rarely did he ever joke about sex. His attitude toward it more nearly approached reverence. That he was worried about Al's intentions toward her was unthinkable. For an instant her mind flashed back to the night she had caught Al watching her, but she dismissed it immediately.

Back in the kitchen she turned off the radio and continued to ponder it over a cup of coffee and a cigarette, but finally gave it up. She did not, however, change out of her pajamas but finally wandered into the bathroom to wash her hair. After all, she thought, she had every right to wear pajamas in her own apartment if she felt so inclined. They certainly were modest pajamas...a complete cover...even buttoned right up tight at the neck.

Perhaps Al's word-choice would not have been 'modest'. The pajamas were some Fred's brother had sent back from Japan for Mary's wedding present. They were of silk--close-fitting blood-red trousers topped by a full-sleeved black jacket with a narrow stand-up collar. Across the back writhed an embroidered golden dragon which matched the twisted golden frogs fastening the front. Like a thin veiling of water the soft material flowed from her shoulders to her breasts, then dropped

sharply to fall straight and smooth to her thighs...

When Al arrived Mary had just finished drying and combing her hair and emerged from the bathroom shaking the darkly shining mass back from her face. She called to him that the door was open and to come in, then let him wait while she applied lipstick. She felt almost as though she were going out on a first date with a new man and wished wryly that Al could be a little less boyish and a little more the cavalier. He would probably be sprawled on the couch with a magazine.

When she finally drifted into the living-room, however, she was pleasantly surprised, for he was standing waiting and dressed in a neatly pressed suit. She had meant to watch his face to see the impression she made, but never before had she seen him wear anything but slacks or dungarees, and, looking at him, she forgot herself. For a moment they just stared at each other. She noticed he was holding something behind his back.

"I brung ya somethin," he said. "Ever since I was small my mother always taught me that when you're a house guest you should present the hostess with a gift. It would have come sooner but the treasury was temporarily depleted." It was a two pound box of chocolates.

The gift was exactly correct, but coming from Al it was a complete surprise to Mary--almost like a personal present. She found herself wondering if Fred would have been as thoughtful, then firmly put it out of her mind. It was the correct

thing to do; Fred would have done it.

She realized suddenly that Al was still standing and hastily sat down herself to open the chocolates.

"Your finery startled me," she said offering him one.

"What's the grand occasion?"

He grinned. "Beside your attire, my finery is pale. I ought to kiss your hand tenderly and say that seeing you is always a grand occasion, but it would be stretching the truth. My mother made me wear it."

Suddenly a bell started ringing from the back of the apartment as though a bill collector were holding his thumb on the button to the back doorbell. Al glanced toward the kitchen in mock apprehension.

"The cops, maybe?" he asked.

"The alarm clock," Mary said. "It got dropped once and some gadgets broke off the back, so we have no way of knowing when it's going off. I better go pull the plug or it will go on ringing till noon."

As Al watched her disappear into the bedroom he reflected that Mary in pajamas--especially those--was almost more intriguing than Mary nude. Even now he felt a little uncomfortable at the memory of being caught peeping that night. The morning after it had happened there had been no allusion to it, but once or twice he had caught what seemed to be an amused glance from her. Since that time she had seemed a little more

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friendly if anything, but he still never felt sure what to expect from her. The relationship between them never seemed to be a casual give-and-take--one or the other was always in command of the situation. For the moment at least it was he, since he had caught her off guard with the chocolates.

The ringing in the bedroom stopped and Mary re-appeared at the door. "Must you grab your bags and rush?" she asked, "or can you stay for a cup of coffee?"

"I'd love a cup of coffee. I've had a trying day. Do you want me to come out?"

"Sure. I can wash dishes while we talk," she said.

He followed her to the kitchen and watched her put the coffee on to boil. When she started the hot water running into the dishpan, he picked up a towel and went over to the sink beside her.

"You don't need to bother," she said. "There are only a few things and they can drain. If you want to be useful, get me an apron from behind the pantry door."

If she had been his mother or even his sister, Al would have tossed, or at least handed her the apron. But seeing that she was Mary he tied it on, being perhaps a trifle more careful than was necessary to get it exactly straight. Mary let him pull and tuck and tie and tie again until he had gone through the procedure twice and had stepped back to view his handiwork. Then she turned and pushed him gently toward the breakfast nook.

"Be gone, wolf, and watch the coffee," she said smiling.

"My mother warned me about creatures like you."

"The bow wasn't perfect." He went to sit down, nevertheless. He was beginning to feel a little less in command of the situation.

"My husband once told me you never paid any attention to girls," said Mary without looking around.

"Tubby sometimes overlooks the obvious."

"Please don't call him Tubby," she said crossly, coming as far as the stove to turn down the heat under the coffee.

"I'm sorry. Childhood habit."

"He may have been a tubby boy but he isn't fat now even if you see him without his clothes."

Al considered a sly remark in answer to this but decided that things had gone far enough. The conversation lapsed while she finished the last few dishes and poured them each a cup of coffee. For the brief few minutes Al had felt in control he had felt full of easy banter, but now once again he was self-conscious--annoyed with her for being so at ease. When she sat opposite him, their knees touching under the narrow table, he became uncomfortably aware of where he was looking. The moment his eyes rested on her face or body he felt that he was ogling, or if he looked away it was to stare concertedly at the table before him or the wall behind her head.

For a moment she made no effort to help him other than

to pour cream in his coffee in silence. The silence became unbearable.

"Where 's Fred?" he asked.

"School."

School...one word...at least she could say "He went in to school." That's five words...I can't sit and ask her questions all morning...she's amused, damn her.

His eye caught the catalogue Fred had been reading. Almost in desperation he reached for it but Mary snatched it from his hands before he could open it and flung it to the floor.

"Hey!" he said. "What's the idea? Did I do something wrong?"

"I sat and twiddled my thumbs all through breakfast while my strong, silent husband pored over that thing, and I won't do it again," she said. "Now talk to me."

"I was born in Chicago," he began, more at ease again. "At an early age my father moved to Boston where..."

"Don't give me that," Mary interrupted. "Tell me something interesting." She leaned over to pick up the catalogue, the coat of the pajamas sliding up to reveal two or three inches of her back.

"You're tanned I see," Al commented as she sat up.

"All over," she answered absently. "I'll show you someday if you're a good boy." She opened the catalogue and leafed through it. "What courses are you taking?" she asked, then

before he could answer, "Whatever became of the reporting job you were talking about?"

"Pipe dream, I guess...Seeing I'm registered, I might as well go on with school."

"What courses are you taking?" she asked again.

"Physiology, two history courses, sophomore English, and advanced French," he answered gloomily.

"Ye gods." Mary made a wry face. "You're really taking the school by storm, aren't you? What are you taking all that stuff for?"

"I have to," he said. "The French I flunked before so I have to do it again. I have to take physiology for a science."

"Stop." She reached over and put her hand on his mouth. "I can see you've gained little profit from your years of schooling. You take a bunch of heavy courses, get behind at the start, and from then on it's a battle to keep from drowning. Right?"

He nodded.

"Now listen to the good advice of Mrs. Mitton's Counseling Service and you'll have no more trouble. What were you taking...give them to me one at a time."

"French," he said.

"Can't get around it? How about Italian or Spanish...they're easier."

"It has to be an advanced language," he said woefully,

"and while I'm not advanced in anything, my record shows one year of elementary French."

"That's a shame." She pondered the situation for a moment. "If only you hadn't passed any language at all we might get you excused on the basis of a psychological block. That's what Chester Scruggs did. Who are you taking it with?"

"I forget his name....Starling...Sturgeon...Spiller?"

"Spillman," she prompted. "He's a snake. Get it with DiFrancisco and you'll pass okay. He'll try to scare you--sarcasm--shouts and jumps around--he'll pass you though. He's a funny little old man--bald as an egg. I remember the year I had him, there was a girl in the front row who had a pronounced Boston accent. The first time he heard her say anything he blew a fuse. He made her say 'cah' and 'pahk' and 'Panamar'. He looked up at the ceiling while we all gawked at him for a minute, then just shook his head sadly and called on the next person. After that, every time he'd call on her he'd have some new words for her to say. I don't think she had to translate any French the whole year."

"Did she pass?" Al asked.

"Sure. Everyone passes his courses--so you get DiFrancisco. Want to write it down? No?...Now what was next?"

"Physiology."

"Don't take it." She said in a positive tone.

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"Don't take it. Leave that to the pre-meds. It's dull and it's hard. Take astronomy."

"Let me talk, will you? I've tried for three years to get astronomy, but it's always full or it comes at the wrong time."

"Don't be silly." She slid out from her side of the breakfast nook and in beside him. "Let me see your schedule," she said. It was the first time she had come so close except for a momentary brush against him. She was concentrating on the catalogue, her thick hair falling over shoulder touching his arm. It was a temptation to slip his arm around her, but he hadn't quite the courage, so he let it rest, instead, along the back of the seat. She was absorbed in making over his schedule, however, chattering on in broken phrases as she worked.

"You've got the wrong history man, too. Switch to Kepner and take your astronomy at three o'clock. Kepner's easy--young, lanky, colorless, heavy glasses and an Adam's apple--scared to death--teaches by those outlines--you don't even have to go to class--memorize the outline and you'll get by the exams--read the book and you'll get an A. What's this English composition?"

"I just took it because it came at the right time and it looked easy," Al said.

"I know how it is. In a big mill like City College you have to grab what you can, but you should always ask somebody

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first. That course is more than comp. They go through what they call Types of World Literature--all extremely boring--essays, letters--that stuff...Let me think what you could take."

She leaned back and closed her eyes to think. Al wondered whether she would sit up again when she felt his hand behind her head, but instead she turned her face toward him, rubbing her head, rubbing the back of his hand with her cheek, catlike. Her skin was cool and very smooth. After she was quiet for a moment, he realized that she had forgotten the schedule. He thought of Fred and wondered again that this should be Tubby Mitton's wife. His name didn't fit her. She didn't look like a Mitton, or act like one.

"Could I ask you a question?" he said at last.

She nodded without opening her eyes, a sort of half smile at the corners of her mouth, again catlike. The sun from the window, reflected on the maple varnish of the seat, made her naturally gold skin almost a bronze color.

"Well?" she said when he was silent.

"Skip it." He didn't want her to move, to open her eyes.

"I know what you wanted to ask," she said.

"Dammit, you always think you know what I'm thinking," he said belligerently.

"You wanted to ask questions about Fred, didn't you?" She opened one eye to see if she had been right, then closed it. "About me and Fred..." Her voice had a dreamy, far-away

quality. Just right. "Nicky Luce, your wealthy, harebrained little Nicky has told you all about my horrible past, and he wonders why I married Fred...and you wonder...I'll tell you something about Nicky, or maybe you know?"

She opened both eyes. Black eyes. He shook his head.

"Your little Nicky is impotent, just like a little eunuch...okay, you don't need to believe me...most people think he's a queer, but he's not. He's impotent. You want to know why I married Fred?...because Fred is honest...honest and hard working...and maybe a little dull.

"I'll tell you something about Fred, too...out of all the goons who took me out, Fred is the first one who asked me to marry him."

All through this she had kept her voice faintly breathy, as though it were a cinema soliloquy she were giving. It felt to Al like watching a slow-burning fuze, waiting for an explosion. It seemed inevitable that she should sit up and scream...tell him to get out, that he wanted only what all you men want. The explosion never came. She just stopped talking, rubbing her cheek slightly on his hand. For the first time the silence was comfortable. The morning was cool, like the taste of fresh mint when you first put it in your mouth. Very faintly, Al could smell the soap she had used on her hair. He was glad he had worn his suit.

After a while she sat up and shook her hair loose.

"I washed it," she said.

"I know."

"You know my kid sister?" she asked abruptly. Her voice was quite firm now. As she had cast her spell, she broke it.

"Sister?"

"Kit Porterfield."

"Is she your sister?" he asked, surprised.

"You do know her?"

"I know who she is. I've seen her around but I didn't know she was your sister."

"Well she is, and she's coming up for supper Friday night. Would you like to come?"

Al looked hard at Mary but her face was impassive.

"Sure," he said at last. The mind-reading was apparently not to be done by both parties. Sometimes Al believed he could read what she was thinking, but what he read he never dared to mention, whereas she was always completely candid.

She slid out from the seat and he followed her to the front of the apartment.

"Tell me one thing," she said. "Why did you mother make you wear a suit?"

He sighed. "It was a long battle. I had to take my sister in to register at school--holy cow!" He had looked at his watch. "I told her I'd meet her at 11:30 and it's after that, now."

"My good coffee made you forget the time," Mary said

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archly.

"My dear, your coffee's terrible but your sweet charming self...where's my stuff? I've got to run."

"Yes," she agreed. "You'd better. My husband might not approve of my entertaining strange men in my night-clothes."

As Al drove toward school, his thoughts, as Mary had designed, remained on Mary. His thinking, as Mary had designed, was confused. She seemed at once so close and so distant. That hot night, her cheek on his hand, conflicted with her obvious devotion to Fred. Or was she devoted to Fred at all?

And what about Nicky? Although Al had denied it, he was aware of rumors about Nicky. How much alike he and Mary were--the same love of being mysterious, that same ever-present histrionic quality. He should drop in on Nicky this afternoon, but Paradise was due at North Station on the 2:54, and Julie still had to be squired around.

His mother had given careful instructions to stay with Julie--"She feels the need of a man in the family, Albert. It's the least you can do for her--to stay with her until registration is finished, then bring her home." Despite his strong protestations that Julie would be better off not to be led around by the hand--backed up by Julie herself--Mrs. Manthorne was adamant. Al had finally given in and taken her to school, leaving her only during the period of the freshman assembly which was to last until eleven. As he now drove across

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the river it was quarter to twelve. In five minutes he would be there, but it would take another fifteen to find her in that mob.

His worries while he had been with Mary had somehow been forgotten, but now he could no longer ignore them, especially seeing that 2:54 was approaching. Julie would be co-operative if the situation demanded, but now that Mr. Clifton Paradise was almost here, Al hadn't the slightest idea what he was going to do with him.

This morning a telegram had come--"ARRIVE THIS AFTERNOON 2:54. IF YOU CAN'T MEET ME WILL CALL HOUSE FOR INSTRUCTIONS"--and Al suddenly realized that he had not yet even mentioned the boy's name to his mother. One glance at her had assured him the time was not favorable, for Mrs. Manthorne was undergoing a case of vicarious pre-school jitters in behalf of the calm Julie. Whatever he was going to do, he had to meet that train. It would never do to have Paradise calling the house. He shuddered slightly thinking of his mother's reaction.

Now that the time grew closer, he wished he had prepared the way a little, he wished he had said no to Paradise--but saying no was almost impossible for Al. Usually he postponed situations until his mind was made up by external circumstances, and at this moment external circumstances were coming in on the 2:54 Portland train.

Fortunately there was a place to park directly in front

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of the school building. He backed into it with considerable elan and glanced hopefully toward school for some sign of Julie. The School of Liberal Arts sat directly on Boylston St. It was an obsequious red-brick building which, despite its seven floors, appeared to cower in the shadow of the massive Public Library to which it was adjacent. From the street it seemed impossible that fifteen hundred students could be jammed into it without being stacked like firewood. Out of fear of burglars breaking in--for which they could have had no reason--or possibly of students jumping out, the windows of the first floor were encased behind steel bars.

Seeing no Julie or anyone who looked familiar, Al left the car and mounted the front steps, or rather was carried in by the current, for the steps were all but invisible under the mass of Freshmen. Freshmen! Al looked around him somewhat smugly, noticing how young they all looked. You could always tell a freshman by his lost expression. They all seemed to be underfed--all except the veterans who were older, and gathered in groups here and there as though for protection.

Upon entering, Al found himself in an immense lobby even more crowded than the front steps had been. The lobby was called--"affectionately" the alumni magazine said--The Marble, since its tiled floor more nearly resembled marble than any other known substance. Looking around, one wondered that there was space left for classrooms, since The Marble was at least

twenty feet high and large enough to have housed forty head of cattle, had it been divided into stalls. A substantial portion of its present livestock was formed into a queue that wound twice around the massive soapstone staircase. The line seemed to originate at a door marked 'Bookstore'. A crowded subway station was never more confused. Al could hardly think for the noise. It was almost as though the subway trains themselves were roaring through the lobby.

He edged his way blindly along one of the dusty yellow walls in hope of finding his sister in the smoking room. Feeling someone pawing him from behind, he put his head down and pushed on more determinedly. The pawing continued. He was about to turn and snarl at whoever it was when he distinguished his name being called above the roar. It was Julie.

"Come on out to the car," she yelled.

Al reversed his field and presently emerged from the building somewhat ruffled, followed by his sister who had been taking advantage of the openings he made.

"What a football game!" she said, climbing into the car. "Is it always this way?"

"Registration days are. That's why I came in early. I got some courses I didn't want, but I can change them when all this dies down," he said with a wave of his hand toward the school.

"Have you much more to do?"

"Quite a little, but you don't need to stay. I've found an escort who seems to know his way around."

"Freshman?"

"He says he's some sort of upperclassman, but he never knows what class. He's got a wonderful name--Joseph Francis Xavier Hanley Mulligan, and he writes poetry and short stories."

"Mulligan?" Al said, musing. "If he's who I think he is, he's pretty famous. How did you get hold of him?"

"He was coming around a corner fast and knocked me down," Julie said. "He's a big big guy, but he's been very nice. He'll be back in a minute. We saw your car, so I told him I'd find you while he was getting something to eat. I think I see him coming." She started to jump out but Al restrained her.

"Stay here," he said. "Make him come to you. He already has more people tagging after him than is good for him. Let him know you're interested but don't be an obvious member of the admiring herd."

"Yes, father," Julie said. "Then you do know him?"

"We've met. Everyone at school knows who he is--but not by all five names."

Joseph Francis Xavier Hanley Mulligan dodged the traffic on Boylston Street, and, hands full of sandwiches, approached the side of the car where Julie sat.

He was, as Al had said, a most famous man around school

It was common knowledge that prior to his college days he had worked in a coal mine, driven a cross-country transport truck, served as a reporter on a Chicago newspaper, renounced the Catholic faith, and seen action with both the Navy and merchant Marine. In addition, it was understood by all that he was the most talented young writer ever to have entered the portals of the college.

He looked the part. Six feet, three inches tall, his slow deliberate movements emphasized rather than concealed a tremendous virile energy. There was always a faintly amused expression on the unmistakably Irish face which he bothered to shave only every three or four days. A reddish mustache matched the thick reddish hair. It was easy to picture him as the ascetic in a garret, working night after night on a novel, munching crusts of dry bread. He was, in short, all that Al would have liked to be.

"May I come in?" he asked. Even his voice was unusual. It had a reedy quality incongruous in one his size.

Julie smiled up at him, opened the door, and slid over on the seat to make room.

"You and my brother have met?" she asked to be on the safe side, glancing first at one, then the other.

"Sure," said Al.

"Everybody knows Al," said Mulligan. He passed sandwiches along, and Al was more pleased than he cared to admit that one

had been brought for him.

"Julie says you'll take her under your wing until she's through registration," Al said.

As Mulligan opened his mouth to answer, Julie stuffed a corner of sandwich into it. He nodded, amused, to Al's question.

For the first time Al realized that Mulligan was attracted to Julie, and felt something akin to family pride in her. After all, he thought, she has the sort of boyish charm that would appeal to a guy like Mulligan. Her hair was carefully brushed today, and without her glasses, her purple-blue eyes appeared more intense than ever. A little make-up made her features somewhat less masculine, however. Maybe it was more than boyish charm...If only she wouldn't say the wrong thing and alienate him.

"That'll help me out," Al said aloud. "I've got a buddy coming in on a 2:54 train, and if you want to give her a hand in the Mill in my place, you'll be doing us both a favor."

Mulligan repeated words to the effect that no mission could be nearer his heart, finished a sandwich in a bite, and invited them both to the cafeteria for a cup of coffee. Julie was agreeable to anything, but, as it was approaching one o'clock, Al begged off on the excuse of preparations for his guest, and shortly drove off after seeing them safely reach the far side of the street.

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Julie and Mulligan stepped into the air-conditioned cafeteria. It was almost as crowded as the school. He stopped and put a hand on her arm. "Look at this Gawd-damned place," he growled. "All these people! I don't think it's worth it for a cup of coffee."

"I'm not thirsty anyway," Julie agreed.

They made their way back out and wandered across the street toward school, but again he stopped her.

"This is just as bad. Why don't we drop over to Perini's for a few beers. When things die down later in the afternoon, we can come back and finish you up in half an hour."

"You don't have to help me if you don't want to," Julie said quickly, wishing her brother hadn't made such a point of it. "I can get through by myself."

"Well, Gawd-dammit, if you can stand it, so can I," he said. He would have taken her by the hand and lunged into the throng as though it were a scrimmage line, but Julie held him back.

"Never mind," she said. "We'd both be crushed. Where's Perini's?"

"Around the corner. It's only a little beer joint, but it's better than that Gawd-damned beanery across the street."

"What are we waiting for?"

As they headed up Exeter St., she reflected that Mother would be horrified at the idea of her unprotected daughter

entering a beer joint, but Gawd-dammit, a woman's got to live her own life.

CHAPTER 8

Through the receiver Al could hear the telephone ringing...

Once.

If only Nicky would be home...There wouldn't be any sense going all the way out to Newton if he weren't there.

Twice.

Absently he looked at the helpful signs put up on the wall of the phone booth giving instructions for dialing the different exchanges.

Three times.

On one of the signs someone had scratched in pencil, "Call Lor - 7717 for a good piece." Al peered out through the narrow window of the booth. He could just barely see two high-school boys inspecting the interior of his car outside the drugstore.

Four times.

Nicky probably would be out by now. Maybe it wouldn't do any good to bring him along, but at least if the three of them--Paradise, Nicky and Al--walked into the house together, Mother couldn't say much. Maybe he should bring somebody else along for good measure.

Five times.

Besides this, Al was curious to see what Nicky would

have to say about Mary. He had mentioned her behavior to no one else. Mary was such a confusing creature, but even at that you had to be careful what you said about other people's wives.

The sixth ring was broken by the sound of the receiver being lifted from its hook on the other end of the line.

"Yes?" said a cool voice.

"Nicky," Al said, "are you dressed yet?"

"Dressed? Of course I'm dressed. I'm always dressed after noon. My dear boy, I'm writing a very difficult letter to one of my naughty friends. Did you interrupt just to inquire as to my state of attire?" The accent was an odd combination of clipped British and tired effeminacy.

"Don't be difficult, Nicky," Al said. "I need your unique presence for a variety of reasons. Can you tear yourself away?"

"Right now?" came the plaintive tone. "That letter was going so well. I was as nasty as I could be."

"Please, Nicky. I need you."

"Oh, very well. He'd probably tear it up, anyhow. Where are you? Where are we going?"

"We've got to meet a train. Can you be at Cleveland Circle in twenty minutes?"

"I shall make a most desperate effort."

"Good," said Al. "Hurry."

It was nearly one-thirty when Al saw the stone fountain

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at Cleveland Circle ahead. He hoped Nicky would be there on time. It had been nearly a week since they had had a chance to talk decently. When Paradise arrived no one would be able to get a word in edgewise.

He swung around the circle, glancing at the knot of people at the bus stop. No Nicky there. His eye wandered to the several benches by the playground and there, seated all alone, was Nicky wearing a grey flannel suitcoat perfectly matching a pair of grey flannel shorts that reached almost to his bare knees.

Cleveland Circle, while it was not a fashionable residential district, was nevertheless an eminently respectable traffic circle and shopping center. It was a place where conformity was the tradition--where people were apt to stare at a well-trimmed poodle, to be genuinely shocked at the presence of an inebriate--at least during daylight hours. At the sight of a calm young man in knee-length shorts, a suppressed electric excitement flicked from person to person. The people at the bus stop stared from the corners of their eyes, and two little boys on the playground stopped tossing a football to watch for developments.

Al's first reaction to the sight was to step on the gas and drive on around the circle as though he had not seen him. Perhaps he could park the car somewhere and induce Nicky to come away as unobtrusively as possible. He was too late,

however, Nicky had recognized the car and was walking toward him, waving. Al pulled to the curb, avoiding the eyes of those at the bus stop.

"Hurry up," he called softly. "Get in here and hide your knobby knees."

"They're not knobby," said Nicky with dignity. He climbed in and closed the door. "See the people stare!" he crowed as Al drove hastily away. "If we were in England, you know, no one would notice."

"But we're in Boston," Al said with a pained look. "What made you wear them? We have a difficult diplomatic mission, and you wear shorts!"

"A mission?" Nicky was interested. "Tell me about it." He settled comfortably in his corner of the seat and prepared to listen.

The shorts were his finishing touch in today's study in affectation which, however, usually took the form of manners rather than attire. As a rule he dressed in a quiet British-looking grey flannel suit, varied occasionally with seersucker.

A small boned boy with a well-shaped head, he might have been handsome had he not been so thin, but his expressive face always made you forget the rest of him. He had large blue eyes behind British-looking round tortoise-shell spectacles, and a smile that always seemed a little sad, somehow. It was an endless source of amusement to Al that his ears moved up

whenever he smiled.

Nicky carried himself and talked like a shade of Oscar Wilde. His speeches were apt to glitter and their content, if not their delivery, seemed the result of a conscious premeditation. People either were amused at him and forgave him his idiosyncracies, or regarded him as a fop and saw nothing but his faults.

"Yes, a mission," Al said. "A rather involved one. Let's go sit by the reservoir and talk a few minutes while we have time." As they drove he explained that he had a guest coming--to stay all year for all he knew--and that his mother was as yet unprepared.

"What is the nature of this Paradise person?" Nicky inquired as they slowed to a stop by the banking above the water.

"I dunno," Al said. "He's shorter than I am...maybe a little thinner..."

"No no no. What a literal mind you have. Is he a nice person?"

"I think so," Al said trying to define a nice person in his mind. "He's going to business school."

Nicky scowled. "I suppose that can be forgiven if he's very poor," he said. "You don't seem to know him awfully well."

"I don't exactly," Al said. "He worked up where I did

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over the summer, and while I saw him a lot I didn't ever get intimate with him. He heard we had a big house in Boston and asked if there was room in it for him, that's all."

"And you told him yes."

"That's what bothers me--I can't remember. Apparently I said yes, since he's coming. I only hope I made some agreement that it would be for only a few days. For all I know he thinks he's found a home." Al stared absently out over the water as he spoke.

"You seem to have quite thoroughly addled things. What do I do?"

"Just be inspired. If I have you along when we get home, Mother will be in a good mood. She likes you."

Nicky was amused. "Shall I think up inspired thoughts now or just bubble forth as the occasion demands?" he asked.

"Just bubble, I guess," Al said. He had been staring out over the water for several minutes in pointed abstraction--hardly paying attention to what Nicky was saying. At last it became obvious enough that Nicky leaned over and peered into his face.

"What is the matter with you?" he demanded.

"I'm thinking," came the answer after a silence, followed by a much more prolonged silence for further thought. Finally he said. "Can I ask you a question? I tried to think of a delicate approach, but I can't."

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"Of course," said Nicky. "I'm feeling communicative today--you needn't have bothered with the build-up."

"You know Mary Mitton pretty well, don't you?" Al asked, watching Nicky's reaction.

"Ah," came the response. "Mary...don't call her Mitton, though...Mitton, Button, Pocket...she was never meant to sound like an article of clothing."

"Porterfield, then."

"Much better. Now what is it you want me to tell you?"

"I was wondering--wasn't she pretty wild before she married Fred?" Al asked dubiously. He realized he had phrased it too bluntly and would get less answer as a result.

"Reasonably so. Yes." Nicky smiled his mysterious smile.

Al waited for him to continue, but no more was forthcoming. "Is that all," he asked at last. "I mean...you aren't being helpful."

"Why? Have you designs on Mary?" Nicky peered mischievously into Al's eyes again. "Or has she told you naughty stories about me?...She goes around saying I'm impotent, you know."

"You're not." Al tried not to make it sound like a question.

"Certainly not. I'm as virile as you are...you're so unsubtle, Al. Shall we drive to North Station?"

Al looked disappointed.

"Haven't you found out what you wanted?" asked Nicky playfully, seeing Al's expression. "Nicky's found out everything he wants and hasn't told Al one single secret...That's mean." He scowled at his own meanness. "Al, if she'd even be seen in public with me, doesn't that make her wicked enough?"

"It might not mean anything," protested Al. "You have lots of perfectly pure friends."

"Dear Al. You're so loyal. Let's go to North Station and meet my rival."

In order to make absolutely sure Paradise did not call the house, Al met the train himself, after posting Nicky by the row of telephone booths with instructions to accost all young men with red hair not over five feet ten inches tall. At exactly 2:54 the train pulled slowly into its berth, breathing hard from the exertion of the long run. It didn't dare be late, Al thought--not with Clifton on board.

For a few worried moments Al could see nothing of his friend, but after the stream of passengers had died down to a trickle, there was Clifton still quite far up the ramp, struggling along with three bulky suitcases.

"Hi, pal," he shouted. "Where do I put my duds?"

Al rushed up to him. They shook hands, divided the load and headed for the phone booths, but Nicky had seen them and was coming.

"Wait a minute," said Al to Clifton, dropping the bags. "Here's a friend I want you to meet. Cliff Paradise...Nicky Luce."

"How do you do?" said Nicky, eyeing the newcomer without warmth.

"It's a pleasure, sir, a pleasure," responded Clifton giving Nicky's hand a thorough shaking. He had a noisy, bluff manner that would have better fitted a two hundred and fifty pound bank executive. You wondered why he needed to bother with business school at all. "I beg your pardon, what was that name again?"

"Nicky Luce," Al repeated.

"Luce...Luce." Clifton grasped Nicky's hand and pumped it several times more. "Indeed a pleasure. Any friend of Al's is a friend of mine...By George!"

"What is it?" Al asked choking down a laugh as best he could. He did not dare look at Nicky's face.

"I've got to get my trunk."

"Trunk?" echoed Nicky eyeing the three bulging suitcases by Al's feet.

If Clifton caught Nicky's thoughts, he showed no sign of it. "Yes," he said. "Where's your jalopy, Al? Just outside? Good, we can get squared away, then. If you two would be kind enough to take these bags out, I'll make a quick trip to the

men's room and the baggage office and meet you at your car before you can say Jack Robinson." Assuming that his plan was acceptable to the gathering, he marched away.

Al picked up two of the bags in silence and left Nicky to follow with the other. In the summer Clifton's manner had seemed appropriate. He had been an eminent success as a cashier and head waiter, but seeing him contrasted to Nicky's suave urbanity, Al was somewhat uncomfortable. He had pointedly avoided Nicky's eye up until now, but Nicky caught up with him, carrying the bag as though it were a wet sock.

"Albert," he said reproachfully. "You've betrayed me. You brought me along just to be a porter for this creature. How could you? How could you do it?"

"I didn't know he was bringing quite so much," Al answered still looking the other way. Somehow he didn't want to hear Nicky's criticism, but now nothing would stop it.

"How could you do it?" he said for a third time, "Why this boy's fantastic. I can still feel his thumb in the back of my hand. He reads Dale Carnegie, too. I could just see his mnemonic system being galvanized into action when he asked my name. Luce...Moose. He'll never forget it if he doesn't see me again until the year 2000."

"Give him a break--it's a facade. The guy's had to work for everything he's had."

"I shall never love him, Al. He's just like my father.

the first thing to do is to get the machine working properly. There
are several things to check. First, make sure the power is on.
Then, check the settings. The machine should be set to the correct
mode. If it is not, it will not work properly. Next, check the
oil level. The oil should be at the correct level. If it is not,
add more oil. Then, check the filter. The filter should be clean.
If it is not, replace it. Finally, check the belt. The belt should
be tight. If it is not, adjust it. Once all these things are checked,
the machine should be working properly. If it is not, there may be
a problem with the machine. In this case, it is best to call a
technician. They will be able to diagnose the problem and fix it.
It is important to take care of the machine properly. This will
help it last longer and work better. Remember, the machine is
only as good as the person who uses it. So, take care of it and
it will take care of you.

He even says 'By George.' I could forgive him anything but that."

They piled the suitcases into the back of the car leaving room for the trunk, and almost before they were finished Clifton appeared around the corner directing a red-cap who was pushing a dolly with a heavy, shiny trunk, prominently displaying the gold initials C. P. R.

"God, Al, he's here already," said Nicky quietly.

Clifton was the sort of young man who finished a job before anyone else had devised a system for doing it. They could hear him now, encouraging the grinning porter--calling him 'my man.' Only when the trunk was fitted in, the porter dismissed, and they were settled in the front seat did Clifton relinquish his command.

"What's next, pal?" he said to Al. His eye wandered around the interior of the car and seemingly for the first time he noticed Nicky's bare knees. "By George!" he shouted. "Shorts!"

Nicky assumed a frozen silence for a moment, then said in his most British tones, "And do you, I pray, have some objection to my shorts?"

"Oh, no," Clifton said hastily. "In fact I admire the man who has guts to wear 'em in this day and age."

Nicky only shuddered at the word 'guts'. Al realized the situation was rapidly becoming worse and wished that either

Nicky had worn more conventional clothing or not come at all. He noticed the correct but conservative pin-striped suit Clifton wore, complete to the gleaming discharge button in his lapel.

"Are you English?" Clifton asked after the last statement had crackled into silence.

"English?" said Nicky airily. "No, I'm not English. Why?"

"Well..." Clifton at last seemed to realize that he had said too much, but could not now go back. "Your accent made me wonder, to tell you the truth. Are you from Harvard, maybe?"

"Harvard?" Nicky smiled indulgently. "No...neither England nor Harvard." He paused just long enough to let this sink in, then added in a confidential tone. "The accent's just an affectation, you know."

This information was too much for Clifton. He had trained himself to be in command of every situation but on the rare occasions when something completely uncontrollable like this occurred, he seemed almost panic-stricken. From the expression of his face it was evident that had it not been for his bags in the back seat, he would have made the quickest possible escape. Condescension rarely penetrated Clifton's unsensitive facade, but when it did, it obviously upset him deeply.

Al saw his expression with pity, yet without knowing quite what to do. He was now very sure that it had been a

The first part of the book is devoted to a general introduction to the subject of the history of the English language. It begins with a discussion of the early forms of the language, such as Old English, Middle English, and Modern English. The author then discusses the influence of other languages on the English language, particularly Latin and French. The second part of the book is devoted to a detailed study of the English language in the Middle Ages. It begins with a discussion of the early forms of the language, such as Old English, Middle English, and Modern English. The author then discusses the influence of other languages on the English language, particularly Latin and French. The third part of the book is devoted to a detailed study of the English language in the modern period. It begins with a discussion of the early forms of the language, such as Old English, Middle English, and Modern English. The author then discusses the influence of other languages on the English language, particularly Latin and French.

mistake to bring Nicky, having entirely forgotten that his main intention in asking him was to quiz him about Mary Mitton.

He had hoped things would go smoothly so that he could explain to Clifton about not telling his mother and perhaps find out how long he intended to stay, but now this was out of the question, not only because of Nicky's attitude, but because of a large trunk and three suitcases in the back seat that could never escape his mother's notice.

The longer Al sat there, the more deadly the silence became, and the less he was able to think of anything to say. Damn Nicky anyway. He usually behaved so sweetly that when he did something mean, you couldn't quite believe it unless you were on the receiving end. Al wished he could get rid of him and apologize to Clifton, but Nicky was enjoying himself now, and Al knew he would not take even the broadest sort of hint offered him. Very well then, he would come home with them and be put to work. Al started the engine.

"We'd better be getting home," he said. "There's a good deal of work to do before tonight. Besides getting your stuff in, Cliff, we've got to drag a bed up from the cellar for you and find a place to put it, which may involve considerable further furniture moving. I hope you guys feel strong."

"Sounds good," said Clifton. "The sooner we can get organized the better."

"Either of you want to stop for anything on the way out?"

Al asked looking out of the corner of his eye at Nicky who was obviously not enthusiastic at the prospect of further regimentation by Mr. Clifton Paradise.

"Al, honey," he said, "I've got a date at the Ritz bar for five. I'd no sooner get out to Cambridge with you than I'd just have to go racing away again. Do you suppose you could drop me off there?"

Al wondered how the 'honey' would strike Clifton, but he had not heard it. He was absorbed in staring out over the river as they drove. He wondered if the bridge had a name, had the New Courthouse pointed out to him, and seemed almost childishly disappointed that they were not in sight of the State House. He seems naive, Al thought, yet in three weeks he'll know the city better than I do.

By the time they dropped Nicky at the Ritz, Clifton had regained his self-assurance. "No hard feelings about the shorts, I hope?" he boomed, wringing Nicky's hand again.

"Not at all. You may even come to be fond of me in them, you know."

Nicky gave Al a final look of condolence and mock accusation, then sauntered away.

"It's been a pleasure knowing you," Clifton called after him, then with full pomp he climbed into the seat, giving the door a slam that rattled its window, shouting, "Home, James!"

Amused, Al raced around the corner and down Commonwealth

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importance of the study and the scope of the work.
He then proceeds to a detailed examination of the
subject matter, which is divided into several
sections. The first section deals with the
general principles of the subject, while the
second section is devoted to a more detailed
examination of the subject matter.

The third part of the book is devoted to a
detailed examination of the subject matter. The
author discusses the various aspects of the subject
and the different methods of study. He then
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second section is devoted to a more detailed
examination of the subject matter.

Avenue. The exhaust pipe had not yet been repaired, and the noise made conversation impossible until he finally slackened somewhat.

"Close friend of yours?" Clifton said after a minute's musing.

"Oh, I suppose so. I see him off and on." Al was more interested in the problem of introducing Clifton as a future family member than in Clifton's views on Nicky.

"You really shouldn't be seen around with that sort of person," Clifton persisted. "People judge you by your friends, you know."

Al winced slightly and changed the subject. "Say, Cliff, I'm afraid I didn't get the situation clearly--about your staying out at the house, I mean. Did you say you intended to find a place of your own pretty soon, or did you want to stay on with us?"

"Whatever's agreeable to you, Pal. You can even stick me in the cellar if there's no room anywhere else, and I'll share the dog's plate if the dining-room's crowded."

"It isn't I who'll object." Al stopped, trying to phrase his thought. He did not want to make his mother sound like a shrew, yet Clifton had to know the situation. "To tell you the truth," he said with a burst of generosity, "I'd love to take you on as a room-mate, but we'll have to see how it sits with my mother."

Clifton's gratitude was touching, however crude Nicky would have considered it. He put his hand on Al's shoulder and shook him saying. "Al, you don't know how much it means to a guy to come to a strange city and find you've got a pal who'll stick by you."

Ordinarily Al disliked being pawed or touched by anyone, but somehow with Clifton it didn't matter so much--a slap on the back was such an integral part of Clifton's sentimental sincerity, and sentimental or not, Al suddenly realized that the little thing he was doing meant a great deal more to someone else than it did to him, and, inexplicably, he liked Clifton the more for it.

"Maybe we can work something out," he said. "If you could chip in toward you board...Mother works, you know."

"I expect to, Al old man. I expect to. Your mother must be a fine woman, holding onto a home for you and your sister."

"She's okay," Al said, not quite with the same enthusiasm. "She's been pretty rushed this last week, that's all, so I haven't yet told her you were coming. Maybe if we didn't take your trunks in right away, but acted as though you had just stopped in for a bite..."

"Say no more, Pal. Say no more. I shall ingratiate myself with your good mother until she sees my sterling quality and demands that I search no further for a home."

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Al looked at him doubtfully for a moment. From his tone of voice it was hard to tell whether he was joking or not when he talked of his own sterling quality. He probably meant it for a joke. Best to account it to his inimitable manner.

In a few moments they had parked the car in the yard close to the Manthorne's house. Although it had not been an unusually hot day, Mrs. Manthorne had lowered all the shades on the first floor "to keep it cool," making the house appear all the more bleak. As they mounted the porch steps, Al noticed how in many places the white paint trimming had chipped away showing the grey cracked wood underneath it.

"Has someone died?" Clifton asked in a worried tone as he noticed the drawn shades.

Al laughed and explained, following his friend in the front door. "The heat bothers her pretty much, I guess."

Inside, the house was not only cool but cold--cold in summer as it was in winter, but unlike the winter cold when draughts poured in from every window, the chill air now was still. It was more like walking into a meat warehouse than your home, Al thought, shivering. The sombre green light cast through the drawn shades reflected on the worn green carpet in the empty hall and the green velvet curtains, pulled over the double door to the parlor, until the walls and woodwork seemed themselves a lifeless green hue.

"You really would think somebody was dead in here," Al

said making the rounds of the windows and snapping up the shades. "Here..." he opened the front door "...let's get some fresh air into this place."

"Is that you, Albert?" Came Mrs. Manthorne's voice from above.

"Yes, Mother. Can you come down? I have a friend I'd like you to meet."

"Just a minute. Is Julie with you?"

"I'll be right up," he called hastily and suited the action to the words, motioning Clifton to make himself at home in the parlor.

"How did Julie do?" Mrs. Manthorne asked as he entered the bedroom. The shades were also drawn here, and she was lying on her bed reading by the light of an electric lamp.

"She's still in at school," Al said. "I left..."

"Albert!" She let her arm drop wearily over the side of the bed, the magazine slipping from her limp fingers to the floor. "I asked you to stay with her as a favor to me. You'll understand why when you're older, but I think the least you could have done..."

"Let me finish what I was trying to say," he interrupted. "She's in good hands. I had to meet this fellow downstairs at the train, so I left her with a friend--an upperclassman. She should be home any time, now."

"It isn't the same as though one of her own family were

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with her." Mrs. Manthorne bit her lip fretfully. "Who is she with?"

"Joe Mulligan. He carries a lot more weight around school than I do. Besides, she was quite happy with him."

This information, rather than bettering the situation, disturbed Mrs. Manthorne even more. Al knew he had said the wrong thing but it was too late to stop the words. Downstairs, he could hear Clifton pecking at the piano, waiting to be introduced. He glanced nervously out into the hallway.

"Oh dear," said Mrs. Manthorne showing no signs of rising. "I suppose he's Catholic. That means more trouble. My sister married a Catholic--Uncle George--and she's never been really happy. She may say she is, but I know that to have a really happy marriage there has to be a basis of true religious understanding."

"Holy cow, Mother," Al said impatiently, having heard this story numberless times. "Just because she spends an afternoon with him..."

"Just the same, that's how those affairs begin. Your Aunt Alice was the same way...just a casual friendship, she used to say."

"Please, Mother, not now, Cliff is downstairs waiting. In any case, Joe isn't a Catholic any more. He's given up the Church."

Mrs. Manthorne wearily lifted herself to a sitting position as Al edged toward the door. The fact that Mulligan had

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renounced his religion seemed to comfort her. At least he was open to reconversion.

"You'll have to do something about your dog," she said still sitting on the edge of the bed. "He's just worn me out today, chasing him around. This is the way every year starts-- I'm worn out before I begin. Tomorrow I have a job in Concord, and I'll have to leave before eight, which means I'll have to be up at six."

"What has Bombo been doing," Al said, ignoring the amount of time she planned to allow for the making of breakfast.

"He insists on climbing into the furniture and getting hair all over everything. Then he knocked the flowers off the tea table with his tail. This afternoon he chewed up one of your father's books. I had to chase after him every time I wanted him because I couldn't think of his name."

Al suppressed a smile at the picture. "Why didn't you put him outdoors, then?"

"I was afraid he'd wander off. I was too busy to keep an eye on him all the time, so finally I had to put him down cellar."

"That's no place for a big, athletic dog," Al snorted. "I'm going down to let him out. You'll hurry down, too, won't you. I want you to meet my friend."

"Who did you say was down there?" she asked. "Get me my old shoes from the closet, will you, dear?"

"Clifton Paradise. He's transferring to City College

this year. Can he stay for supper?" Al procured the shoes from the closet and held them for her while she slipped her feet in. For an anxious moment she did not answer but seemed lost in thought. The moment became two, then three. If she was to be this difficult about Clifton's staying to one meal, what would be her reaction to his coming to board? Finally she spoke.

"Albert, what is his name? I just can't make it stick in my head."

"Paradise?"

"The dog's name, dear." She smiled him a smile--motherly understanding of his inability to keep his mind on one subject.

"Bombo, Mother...Won't you come down now?"

"All I could think of was Buster. Couldn't we change it to Buster?"

"Please, Mother, Cliff is..." he stopped in despair. "I'm going down," he said after a minute, then added in a positive tone as he went through the door, "Cliff is staying for supper. Let me know if you need any extra food."

As he went down the stairs he heard her call something about coming right down, but went on himself without troubling to answer further. If she came, she came; if she didn't, she didn't. Clifton was staying to supper--step one.

After stopping a moment in the living-room to assure Clifton that the extended conversation upstairs had not been

in vain, he went to release Bombo who was overjoyed and showed no inhibitions about telling Al so, nearly knocking him down in the process. Al did his best to restrain him without hurting his feelings. "Cliff," he called into the next room, "speak to him and see if he remembers you."

"Bombo?" came Clifton's voice uncertainly.

The dog looked at Al to see if it were all right, then ambled into the next room, sliding a rug askew in navigating the corner. There was a moment of silence, then a thump.

"Help!" came Clifton's voice. "He remembers."

Al followed the dog's path, nearly tripping over the rug, himself. In the parlor Bombo was saying hello in his most polite manner. He had Clifton pinned supine on the couch and was standing over him offering further unwanted caresses. By the time Al had them untangled, Mrs. Manthorne's steps were to be heard descending from above.

Al introduced them, without trepidations now that it was established that Clifton was to stay for dinner.

"How do you do?" she said. "Albert, dear, we can't have him in the house, that's all there is to it."

Clifton's face registered something not far short of alarm. He had only recently adjusted himself to Nicky's behavior, and the second crisis had come too soon. Al, however, was not to be fooled again. He put his arm around the dog's neck.

"I'll be around to look after him the next few days," he

said, "and if I go anywhere I'll take him with me to keep him out of trouble."

Had Clifton looked at Al the matter would have been cleared up at once, but he was still staring at Mrs. Manthorne in astonishment. With Al's speech, his expression changed to that of one who is determined to leave immediately, never to return. His naturally pink face turned a vermillion that glowed up into his hairline.

"Why don't you put him out now," said Mrs. Manthorne, "at least until we can decide what to do with him."

"Okay," Al said. "Come on, Bombo," and the dog trotted obediently after him to be let out the front door.

Clifton's face now lost its color altogether as he sank weakly onto the couch. Mrs. Manthorne went to the window and peered out into the yard and street.

"Did you see any sign of Julie when you were out there?" she asked as Al returned to the room.

"No, Mother," Al sighed, fully expecting to have to explain all over again that Julie was in the best of hands, but suddenly Mrs. Manthorne began to knock furiously on the window pane.

"Buster!" she called excitedly. "Stop him, Albert. He's in my iris bed."

"Digging?" Al started back toward the front door.

"No, he's..." she stopped hesitantly, looking over at

Clifton.

"Ho." Al returned to the room grinning. "Good for 'em."

Whatever had been happening outside apparently ceased, for Mrs. Manthorne relinquished her post at the window. "I'm afraid I hardly said hello to you," she apologised to Clifton as she came to sit beside him on the couch, "but that dog has had me running all day."

"He needs a little discipline, that's all," Al said defensively. "He obeys me, and in time he'll obey you if you'll only have a little patience."

"Do you suppose we could take out insurance on him?" Mrs. Manthorne asked.

"Why?" said Clifton in wonder. "Is he valuable?"

"I mean insurance on what he might do. He's broken a vase and chewed up one of Mr. Manthorne's books just today."

"Don't be ridiculous, Mother," Al exploded. "If he does any more damage I'll pay for it. I don't think there even is such a kind of insurance."

"There must be," she said doggedly. "I could change over my hurricane insurance to dog damage insurance."

"That's foolish, Mother. What if we should have another hurricane?" His indignation seemed more than the situation demanded, but he had a purpose in mind.

Mrs. Manthorne bit her lip. "Why must you children oppose me in everything I do?" she said.

"Okay," said Al airily. "It's your insurance policy. Do anything you like with it. Why don't you call up about it now, if you're determined, before he gets into more trouble."

"You'll excuse me," she said to Clifton after a moment's hesitation. Clifton smiled, and she started out to telephone.

As she was leaving Al called after her, "Cliff and I are going out to bring his things in, Mother. He's going to stay with me for the night, or until he can find a room of his own."

"Yes, dear," came his mother's voice. They could hear her dialing the number of the insurance company. Clifton, it appeared, would also be around for breakfast--step two.

Once Julie came home and family relations returned somewhat to normal with the preparation of supper, Clifton proved to be a most amenable guest. He admired Mrs. Manthorne's house--something no one else had done for several years--and repeated his statement that she had done well to keep a home for the children. He agreed that keeping the shades down was the best way to have a cool house in the summer. He admired her collection of antique china, commenting that his own mother would be indeed green with envy, by George. After supper he helped wash the dishes, and best of all, he turned out to be a member in good standing of the Congregational Church, and had been president of the Church young people's group in his home town. Shortly after this was learned, Mrs. Manthorne was heard

insisting that he must stay not only tonight, but at least until he could find living quarters that were both comfortable and economical.

At first Al was amused and took Clifton aside to congratulate him on the act, only to discover that he had meant every word he said, by George, and felt that Mrs. Manthorne was a very fine, hard-working woman. Seeing his mother happier than she had been since her arrival home, Al decided that Clifton was a good thing. Mother needed someone who would appreciate her. Julie needed more men around the house, and Al himself needed the peace a contented family could give. Besides, Cliff could help with the odd jobs that needed doing. Perhaps they could even paint the trimming together in the spring.

After the dishes were washed, Mrs. Manthorne, Al, Julie and Clifton all wandered into the living-room to sit and talk and enjoy each other's company. Mrs. Manthorne said it was almost like old times and wished it were cold enough to have a fire in the fireplace. At this, Al was thoroughly convinced he had done better than he knew in bringing Clifton home. Fireplace fires were the epitome of "home" to Mother. Even Julie seemed interested and hung around until they decided it was time to help Clifton get settled for the night. Al noticed that she did not once mention Mulligan's name. Later, when he saw her alone for a minute on the stairs, he asked her what she thought of Clifton.

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"He's cute, I guess," she said, "but a little corny."

"And Joe?" Al raised an eyebrow.

"That's another matter."

"Joe comes first, then?" he said, and when she nodded, "Does he like you?"

"We've got two dates--tomorrow and Saturday," she said.

While they talked, the telephone had been ringing. Mrs. Manthorne answered it, and presently called Al down to speak, whispering that it was Fred Mitton.

"Hello, Al," came Fred's voice. "Are you planning anything for Friday evening?"

"Why, of course..." Al began, then stopped. Friday was the night Mary had asked him for supper, but perhaps Fred didn't know. "On second thought," he said, "I'm free. I was thinking of Saturday, I guess. What's up?"

"Mary and I are having her younger sister over for dinner, and I thought it might be nice to have you along to balance things up...you know?"

"I'd love to," Al said, feeling a little as though he were reciting lines in a play. "What time?"

"I'm glad you asked, Al. It'll have to be early. I've got a job, now, working three nights a week in a community house in town, from eight o'clock till one. I'd have to leave the house at about seven-thirty, so we'd better have supper at about five. Can you make it?"

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"Sure," said Al. "Thanks a lot, Fred." He hung up and started down cellar to help Clifton carry up a bed spring. What was Mary up to, anyhow? Had she not told Fred that Al was already invited for fear that Fred would think--think what? Or was she merely going through polite formalities? Perhaps she wanted Fred to feel he was the head of the family. But why should this be necessary?

Clifton was at the bottom of the stairs making a manly effort to carry the spring alone, and further speculations were lost as Al hastened to assist him.

Later that night when Clifton was finally settled in bed, Al threw a bathrobe over his shoulders and went down to speak to his mother.

"Have you taken care of your dog?" she asked when he came in.

"He's up in the room with us," Al reassured her. "What do you think of Clifton?"

"He seems awfully fine," Mrs. Manthorne said with enthusiasm. "That's the kind of boy I'd like to see Julie with. You can tell right away that he comes from a fine home. He's so clean and forthright."

"I was wondering," Al began, "if we mightn't keep him. Did you notice how much better we all behaved toward each other because he was here. Perhaps we need to have someone around to remind us that courtesy at home is more important than courtesy with strangers. We seemed more like a family tonight than we

have for years. Don't you think so?"

Mrs. Manthorne's face took on a new look of peace. "I think you're right, dear," she said. "Of course we're not sure he wants to stay."

"I think we can talk him into it," he said smiling.

As he went back up the stairs toward his room, Al's smile became even broader. From an inauspicious beginning, things had turned out extremely well for everyone concerned. Now Mrs. Manthorne herself was anxious that Clifton should stay--step three.

CHAPTER 9

"Come in, Al," said Fred opening the door. "Kit and Mary went out for a few minutes to get some ice cream, I think. Supper's almost ready."

Fred led the way into the parlor and sat down, but Al wandered around the room inspecting the pictures on the walls. Funny, he thought, how you could live a week in a place without noticing the pictures...two Degas ballet scenes, a Renoir print. Tasteful, conventional...Mary's choice. The apartment was full of Mary. Not only the prints--the curtains, the rugs, even the heavy unchangeable pieces of furniture, masked by summery floral chintz coverings. The table in the dining room laid out for four with Mary's china and Mary's silver. Al noticed the initial on the silver was not "M", but "P". Hedda Gabler's married name was Tesman...

With Mary always about it was hard to see Fred as the same person Al had grown up with, but now that she was gone even for a few minutes, Al unconsciously felt a small portion of the old familiar intimacy returning. Fred seemed more like himself somehow, yet no word was spoken. There was nothing that needed saying. Silence was more native to Fred than the odd, forced company manners he seemed to feel were necessary in Mary's presence. If she had been there, there would have been strained smiles, platitudes about the arrival of cooler

weather, the various aspects of school life, the coming Boston World Series. Seeing Fred sitting reading on Mary's chintz covered couch in the apartment whose very walls exuded Mary's personality, in the apartment where Mary's piano, Mary's twin lamps, Mary's delicate china ashtrays with Mary's lipsticked cigarette butts, and Mary's silver framed picture of Fred sitting on Mary's piano, sitting on Mary's Brussels doily to keep Mary's picture from scratching Mary's piano--seeing Fred sitting there it occurred to Al how much it was as though Fred were not at home, but visiting someone...sitting reading until the hostess should present herself. Or was Al's empathy putting Al's emotions into Fred's person? Was Fred Mitton no longer Fred Mitton, but Fred Porterfield..."there goes Mary Porterfield's husband." No, of course not. Fred was Fred.

Fred was the Tubby whose back yard used to be juxtaposed to that of the Manthorne's, the Tubby Al discovered on the second day after they moved to Cambridge. They were both in the same room in school from the fourth grade until freshman year at high school. Mr. and Mrs. Manthorne belonged to the Congregational Church as did the Mitton tribe...Al and Tubby were in the same Sunday School class. Yet all these similarities had not made Tubby a friend, but more nearly a fixture like the yard or the trees in the yard where Al climbed when there was nothing else to do. If there were milk bottles to be rounded up and turned in for nickels--a job for two--Al

would get Doug or Carlisle, never Tubby, but if there were going to be a game of relieve or football Tubby would be called in because you needed a lot of kids and because Tubby was always willing. If it were raining and there were nothing to do, you could go over to Tubby's and find something. If it were summer and all the other kids were away, you and Tubby could go down swimming at the river. That was before high school.

During high school and even into college you lost track of Tubby. You dropped out of the scout troop; he stayed on. You waited for Martha Warren and walked her home, but Tubby still played football in the afternoons with Doug and Carlisle. You seldom saw Doug and Carlisle now, but you saw Tubby even less although your back yard and his were still divided only by the hedge. The broken places in the hedge filled in since you no longer tramped through going back and forth.

Then later, when Doug enlisted and Carlisle and the others were drafted, the time came when only Al and Tubby were left--Tubby because he had permanently injured a kidney in football, Al because he had been deferred at his mother's request. They began driving in to school together. Tubby helped Al squeak through his freshman English exams. When Al was finally drafted, it was Tubby who came down to the train with Mrs. Manthorne and Julie to see him off.

And so it had been that Tubby was a friend at the first and at the last, yet in the middle years, a part of the

scenery. While Al was in service he heard indirectly of Tubby through his mother's letters. "Fred was asking for you...Fred envies you...he drops in every now and then to keep me company.. a real comfort, almost like a second son." Then shortly before Al was discharged, "Fred is being married next Saturday, so I don't suppose we'll be seeing much of him from now on although he's still in school."

This had startled Al. Again it was not the losing of a friend but the displacement of a fixture. He regarded Fred's marriage as he would have regarded the tearing down of the Five and Ten and the putting up of a bank in its place. He wondered how a guy like Tubby ever got up nerve to ask the girl, but it never occurred to him to wonder what his wife would be like.

He gave the matter so little thought that he even forgot Fred was married and had to be reminded when they met again last year at school. After he was introduced to Mary, though, he never forgot her again. Instead of the drab, mousey little girl with thick glasses Al had expected, here was a tall, robust woman with gold-colored skin, black hair, high cheek bones and high spirits. That spring he found himself dropping in on Fred more frequently than he ever had when they were next-door neighbors.

It was only natural, then, that he landed on the Mittons when, late in August, he returned to Boston without a job or

place to go. Fred had taken him in warmly but Mary was less enthusiastic, and after a day or two it became apparent that she would have been just as happy to have payed Al's room and board at the Y.M.C.A. for the remainder of the week, had such an arrangement been feasible.

Her attitude came as quite a shock to Al who was not used to being disliked by anybody. His easy charm and harmless chatter had made him friends wherever he went. Like Rip Van Winkle, Al was perfectly willing to work for anyone but himself. If there were dishes to be washed, wood to be cut, if someone needed a ride Al would always be the first to volunteer. Being good-hearted and generous--and knowing your own virtues--it is always disconcerting to find the stubborn person who refuses to be beguiled.

At first Al thought it must be that Mary felt he was chasing her. He had too much sense not to realize his visits to Fred were not for Fred's sake alone. Then it occurred to him that he patronized Fred, and he tried to correct his error. He helped with the dishes, offered to go shopping, even offered to do house cleaning. It never occurred to him to dislike Mary in return, not only because she attracted him but because he couldn't stand to be disliked, himself. If she had been a man, his reaction would have been the same.

He began to feel that Mary had changed Fred, that the old boyhood friendship was lost, assuming somehow that one had

once really existed. Then started her peculiar paradoxical behavior, until now he was at once sure that she liked him--and disliked him; that she was devoted to her husband--yet bored with him and using him as a tool.

But of course Mary had not changed Fred. There he sat reading, even taking notes on what he read--the same stolid, precise Fred, perhaps a little more fleshy now that he had no time for sports. Soon he would be taking up golf to keep in shape--as soon as school was over and he could settle down, Fred would enjoy golf. He always excelled at games where you competed with yourself.

Al finally alighted on the couch beside his friend, peered over his shoulder at the book, found it dull, and went fishing through the pile of magazines on the table in search of one whose cartoons he had not seen. No luck.

"Fred."

"Sir?" Fred smiled and looked up.

"Tell me about your job. How do you expect to work every night and get any studying done?"

"Oh," Fred put away the book as he heard footsteps on the stairs. "It's only Tuesdays and Fridays. Eight to one sounds like a lot of work, but there's not much to do. I'm sort of a combination night watchman and janitor in a community house in Boston. Mostly only a bunch of old ladies. Bridge clubs and that sort of thing."

There was an impatient knocking at the door. "Hey, open up," shouted Mary. "We're without keys."

Al strode to the door, and opening it a crack, peered through. "Be more polite," he said, "or you'll get no admittance to my abode. We don't solicit peddlars."

"Careful, Bud," said Mary pushing him out of the way. "You'll lose your nose...Move, move. This ice cream is about to melt against my bosom."

Al, conscious of Kit's eyes as well as Mary's snatched the package and cradled it like a baby against his own flat chest. "Poor, molten ice cream," he crooned.

"Come, Mother Manthorne, return my baby," Mary said. She tried to take it back but he held on to it, their bodies close for a moment.

"Let go," she said. "We've got to get supper before Fred has to leave."

He relaxed his hold, and Mary slipped by him and out toward the kitchen. All this time Kit had been standing in the hallway watching. Now she knocked on the doorsill.

"May I come in?"

"Oh, excuse me," Al said. "I didn't know you were still standing out there." This was a rather obvious untruth, since there had been no possible way for her to get in.

She stepped inside now and handed him a package. "In case your real interest was in the ice cream," she said, "here

it is."

"What was in the other package?" asked Al, astonished.

"Asparagus. I think you were taken in." She turned her back on him and went in to speak to her brother-in-law.

Al could think of no fit retort and so went out to the kitchen to reaffirm his position in the family's good graces by helping to put the final touches on dinner. Kit wasn't as pretty as Mary, anyhow.

While they were eating, Al could not avoid comparing the two girls. He had hardly payed any attention to Kit at school, yet seeing her with Mary now he was struck both by their similarities and by their differences. They had the look of sisters--the same long oval faces and prominent cheek bones. They were both tall. Yet every one of Mary's features when applied to Kit seemed second rate. It was almost as though they had used Kit for an experimental model, the perfected, finished product coming in Mary...but Mary had come first...maybe Kit was a poorer copy, turned out by an inferior craftsman. In any case it was painfully obvious that she did try to copy her older sister.

Seeing her do it, you sensed how much of her life had been Mary-dominated. She seemed to have no choice but to copy, and somewhere from remote obscurity you remembered seeing two cute little girls whose proud ~~mama~~ had carefully selected matching yellow frocks and patent-leather pumps, size seven for

Mary, size five for Kit.

Mama should have had more sense, for where Mary's thick, coarse hair was a gleaming black, Kit's was a more nondescript brown, not quite as luxuriant. While they were both tall, Mary had enough weight to carry her height unselfconsciously. Kit, ten pounds underweight, inclined to stoop or slide down in her chair, making her long legs the more obvious. Mary's dark skin allowed her to wear vivid lipstick and nail polish. Kit was quite pale; she rarely bothered with make-up.

Their personalities struck you the same way. Mary the ebullient, the domineering. Mary whose personality filled the room. The gleaming crystalline chandelier. Had Kit's presence not been a novelty you hardly would have realized she was sitting opposite you. She seldom spoke, and when she did it was in a low tone to Fred on her left. The slow-burning, blue-flamed alcohol lamp. As dinner wore on, Al became increasingly less conscious of her presence. He satisfied himself that she was watching him, then concentrated his attention on Mary and Fred.

"I've finally got my courses set for the year," he said. "Not that I've been to any classes yet...if only they gave credit for playing bridge--I've put in eight hours, already." He smiled, half in apology for the worn-out joke and half because he saw Fred's nearly imperceptible frown of disapproval. Turning more deliberately to Mary, he continued, "I have it all

figured out--how many cuts I can get away with this semester. Since my courses are twice as easy I should be able to cut twice as much but that would mean I didn't go at all, so I've decided to hit about one out of three classes."

"What are you taking?" asked Mary. "You told me but I forget."

She smiled back, but there was a faint warning trace of apprehension in her eyes, and as she wiped her mouth with her napkin she continued to look at him concertedly. She had not, then, told Fred of his extended stay last Monday morning. He was tempted to blurt out that she had, after all, made out his schedule for him, but he only said:

"History courses, psych, French, astronomy--dull stuff."

"Why don't you take more interesting courses and go to class more often?" Fred asked logically.

"He doesn't know what he's interested in, dear," said Mary. "He's a poor, maladjusted veteran trying to find a grindstone so he can put his nose to it."

"I don't know how maladjusted I am," bristled Al. "By what standard do you call me maladjusted. Look at a lot of guys. Take Joe Mulligan..." He paused a minute to let the significance of his familiarity with the famous name sink in..." Joe's kicked around a lot more than I have. We're both unanchored, but he manages to be more spectacular about it than I do."

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"But he can write," said Kit looking as she spoke straight into her empty plate.

It was true. Al had read several of his fragments that had been passed from person to person last spring. They were sensuous little sketches--full, yet somehow fragile, written in an almost Biblical, pastoral style that lost none of its charm in its contemporary settings. All of them were badly typed with execrable spelling--but he certainly could write. There was no doubt about it. This, however, was not the point Al wished to make at the present moment.

"So he can write!" he said. "So can a dozen other guys around school. Multiply that by the number of colleges in the country and what have you got? His future is no more secure than mine. Besides, by the time I've been around as much as he has I may be writing, too."

Mary clasped her hands against her cheek in girlish mock ecstasy. "Just think...some day we may say that we once had the great author Albert Manthorne to our humble flat for supper. The author of the Great American Novel--Albert Manthorne. What's your middle name, Albert Manthorne? Authors should always have three names."

"I won't tell," said Al mimicking her mincing tone.

Her reaction was startlingly instantaneous. She slipped from her chair and knelt at Al's side, grasping his hands and throwing her head back. "Please, sir, I implore thee most

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humbly. Tell me thy central name. It isn't much I ask thee and it means so much, so very much...to me." With her last words she let her head fall forward onto his lap and rest for a moment.

It was cooler today, she was wearing a sleeveless wool sack dress gathered at the waist. When she threw her head back, the material was pulled tightly over her full breasts. Again he briefly pictured her as he had seen her in the kitchen that hot night. When she dropped her head into his lap he could feel her warm breath in the palm of his hand.

Al glanced at the audience briefly to assure himself that they were at least politely amused, then gently raised her head. "Thou shalt know, my child," he said. "Thou shalt read it on the fly leaf of the Great American Novel."

"I see your sister is going around with Mulligan," said Fred after a moment's silence.

Al looked up, pleased that it had been noticed. "They seem to get along," he said.

It was a relief to have the subject come back to an everyday level. Mary's sudden flights into melodrama--or was it ultra-sarcasm--always made Al uneasy. Perhaps if they had been in more congenial company...but even at that she seemed almost hysterical at times. You never knew what to expect from her next. She obviously made Fred uncomfortable too, yet he never seemed able to do more than change the subject. She

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continued to sit on the floor beside Al, now, as he and Fred were talking.

"Have they known each other long?" Fred asked.

"Not very long." What was Fred leading up to? He never asked questions of that sort without a definite purpose.

"What does your mother think?"

Al smiled. "What are you trying to say?"

"I'd better shut up. It's none of my business."

"Fred, you're my oldest friend. You can't offend me,"

Al assured him. "Don't you approve of Joe?"

"I hardly know him, so I don't suppose I should say anything," Fred said, "but I hate to see Julie get hurt...you know?"

"You mean he'll get tired of her?"

"That too, I suppose. What I meant was that Julie's young and he's at least twenty-five. We both know what that sort of person is after in a kid like Julie. After all, she isn't on an intellectual level with him--she hasn't had time."

"So what? He'll help her grow up."

Fred looked surprised that Al apparently had not caught his meaning and was silent for a minute.

"If you mean he might sleep with her--you'll pardon the expression, Kit--it wouldn't hurt her, really. I'd rather it were Joe than some tramp she picked up," Al said.

"Does it have to be anyone?"

"Won't it be--sooner or later?"

"I'm not so sure." Fred stopped a moment to think.

Through the open window came the distant whine of a siren and a brash bell. The clamor grew as the fire engines came closer. The sound seemed to come at first from the left, and then from the right as well. One engine passed under the window, and they could hear it stop a few doors up the street. Then a second, and a third.

Mary was on her feet. "Fire!" she shouted running to the front window. "Maybe your old car is coming to an untimely end." She was kneeling on the couch and pulled aside the curtains to look out.

"Is it in the way?" Al asked. They were all up now following Mary's lead. Al plumped himself down beside her on the couch.

"I don't think so," Mary said. "The conflagration seems to be up the block. You can't see fire for the firemen."

This was literally true. There were four gleaming red and brass trucks entirely blocking the street, and between twenty and thirty raincoated firemen were officiously running about, directing traffic, connecting hose lines, and setting up ladders against an apartment house that was tantalizingly only half-visible because of the curve in the street. Some of the firemen wore red helmets and some black, and all of them seemed to be numbered. Watching them, you sensed a tremendously

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1. The first part of the report is the introduction.

The introduction is the first part of the report and is usually the longest. It should contain a brief statement of the purpose of the report, a statement of the scope of the report, and a statement of the methods used. It should also contain a brief statement of the results of the study and a statement of the conclusions.

The introduction should be written in a clear and concise manner.

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businesslike urgency and suppressed excitement as they trotted to and fro. Most of them carried hatchets, a few had torches, and one was helping another to strap on his back a red chemical tank with a hose attachment.

In order to see anything, you had to get your head outside, but Al and Mary were taking all the space in the only unscreened window.

"I'm going down to have a look," Fred said. "Anyone coming?"

"I will," said Kit following him out the door. In a moment Al could see them come out the front entrance below and join the moving crowd that grew with each minute. Then they were out of sight.

"Want to go down?" he asked.

Mary shook her head. He could feel the heat of her bare arm against his, even through his shirt sleeve. He moved to put his arm around her shoulder, but she pulled away slightly. "People," she murmured...The dress was bright kelly green, and its contrast to her clear gold-brown arms in the late afternoon sunlight made her skin seem almost to glow as it had Monday morning over coffee.

"Your husband shouldn't leave me alone with you." As soon as Al said the words he regretted them. Up until now everything that had passed between them could have been taken for a joke, but he realized that this time his tone had been in

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earnest. He tried to force a laugh to take the curse off it, but nothing came. If she were going to be offended, now was the time. He waited but she did not speak nor even turn her head toward him. Instead she ducked back inside and, reaching behind the magazines on the table, pulled out a pair of plastic, blue-rimmed glasses.

"If I'm going to watch I may as well see," she said putting them on.

"They don't look bad," Al smiled. "New?"

She nodded and leaned out the window again. Looking over her shoulder, Al still could not see the fire itself. Below, people were coming and going. The firemen had thrown up a cordon to keep the crowds back, but they climbed over and milled in around the engines, splashing in the water that now filled the street--thoroughly enjoying themselves. Four street cars were lined up beyond the crowd, their curious passengers peering out or dismounting to join the crowd.

Al glanced over at Mary again. The glasses made her look unlike herself. "You look better without them," he said reaching up to take them from the bridge of her nose.

"Don't drop them." She cupped her hands under her face.

He extricated the bows gently from her hair, squinted through them, then put them on, himself. "How do I look?"

"Silly...give them back."

"No." He leaned back inside as she reached for them.

"You look silly. Give them to me." She pushed him back onto the arm of the couch and, struggling, inched herself onto his back in an effort to reach them, but he took them off and held them at arm's length away from her. When she had almost reached them, he suddenly flipped over, catapulting her and himself to the floor where they wrestled frantically for a moment. When her head turned, he shoved the glasses under the couch, and it was not until he let her pin him down that she discovered it.

"Where did you put them?" she asked, panting.

"Put what?"

"My glasses, dammit." She began to pound his head against the floor with the heel of her hand.

"Hey!" he said. "Don't." He rolled over, displacing her with difficulty, then pinned her in turn on her back. If she had fought back he would have let her up, but she lay there smiling, her lips half parted.

"Now what are you going to do?" she asked.

The temptation was too much. Entirely forgetting the open door. He dropped down beside her, gathered her in his arms and kissed her. For a moment she responded, then suddenly, violently pushed him away.

"The door's open," she gasped. "Get up! Fred and Kit might come back any moment." She ran to the door to look, then sighed with relief. "Quick. Help me straighten out the rug."

Neither of them spoke as they quickly cooperated in straightening the disorder they had created. The couch had to be lifted while she pulled the rug back under his feet. The chintz cover had to be pulled tight, the magazines piled neatly back on the table.

"Wipe your mouth," Mary said. "It's all red...am I smeared?"

He shook his head in silence. Outside he could hear the engines ringing their bells and gunning their motors in preparation for leaving. He went to the window and watched the raincoated men trying to turn them around in the melee of traffic, people, and streetcars. Fred and Kit would be coming up any time now...Fred would have to go to work soon. What if they had come in while he and Mary were wrestling on the floor, or while he had been kissing her? It was only luck that they hadn't. What would Fred have done--Fred with his conservative, moralistic ideas?

Mary had disappeared toward the bedroom. What did she think? Her only reaction seemed to be the fear of getting caught.

He tried to think, to feel for any pricks of conscience, but no gloomy remorse was forthcoming. What Fred didn't know wouldn't hurt him...but what if he and Kit had walked in? Perhaps conscience was not gloomy remorse but a fear of being caught. The best way to avoid that, of course, was to be careful. Whatever had possessed him to kiss her at a time like

that?...but you couldn't always plan things out in advance; you had to take advantage of your chances when they came.

Hearing footsteps on the stairs, he rubbed the back of his hand across his mouth once more, looked at it to make sure there were no more traces of lipstick, and went to the still open door to meet them.

"What burned?" he asked.

"It was inside a restaurant," said Fred. "We were right up front but we never did see much--not even much smoke. They were up on the roof too, so I suppose it must have been some sort of chimney fire."

"Where's Mary?" Kit asked looking around.

Al glanced at her sharply. Why did she want to know where Mary was? What difference did it make--none. Probably it was just a casual question. Kit probably wondered whether or not Mary had gone out doors with the crowd. It suddenly occurred to Al that it was perfectly possible that they had come back while he and Mary had been wrestling--that they had come back and gone away again to avoid an embarrassing situation. He hoped his face did not show alarm at the thought.

"She's out back, I think. I was watching out the window and didn't notice where she went. She might have gone downstairs while I wasn't looking..." He checked himself, realizing that he was saying too much. He hoped Mary wouldn't turn up and blurt out something that would make it obvious he had

been lying. "Mary," he called loudly. "Mary, are you getting dessert?" He turned to Fred. "What time do you have to go to work?"

"Oh Lord," moaned Fred. "Twenty-five minutes. I won't have time for dessert."

"Sure you will. I'll take you over as soon as the crowd thins out. It isn't far is it?"

Mary suddenly was with them, quite calm and collected. Al had not seen her come and started noticeably "Where have you been?" he said almost accusingly. What had been an offhand question from Kit now burned in his mind, and he was determined to ask her before anyone else could speak.

"In the "john", since you ask," she answered. Her coolness made him realize how upset he had been, and he hoped again that his nervousness had not been too noticeable. Deliberately turning his back on them, he lighted a cigarette and strolled once more to the window.

"I think the jam will be entirely cleared in a few minutes," he reported. "We'd better eat dessert now if we want to share it with our host." He felt his confidence returning. "Our most noble host."

"This is only my second night on the job," said Fred. "I think I'll go get ready now so I won't be late. Maybe I can get my dessert when I come back."

"At two in the morning?" said Mary.

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"Well, tomorrow then." He went toward the bedroom.

"If you're driving that way," said Kit, "could you drop me off at the library? I want to do some studying there--get it out of the way."

"Hey!" said Mary. "Isn't anybody going to stay and help me eat the ice cream?"

"But I have to get to work, dear," said Fred as he reappeared tying his tie.

"Wait a second." Mary ran out to the kitchen and returned with the ice cream. "I cheated and ate some while you were watching the fire. You take it and eat it on the way. Fred, you can bring the spoons home when you come." She handed them each a spoon, then herded them toward the door. "Go on now, or you'll make him late...Yes, you had a wonderful time...Go, go."

When they drove away Mary waved to them from the window until she was out of sight. Kit was in the middle of the front seat holding the ice cream in her lap. She had two spoons, one for herself and one to feed Al who had demanded the service. Fred held his own spoon. By the time they let Fred off, the ice cream was gone except for what was melted.

"Thanks a lot, Al," he said as he got out. "I would have been late if you hadn't brought me. Consider that you have earned your meal." He collected the spoons and disappeared into the building, putting them in his pocket.

"Now where did you want to go?" said Al turning to Kit who did not look as though she wanted to go anywhere.

"Library, I guess." She yawned.

"But we went right by it. Why didn't you remind me?"

"I was too busy feeding you--as you commanded," she said. "Maybe I even wanted the ride. However, I'm sufficiently aired now. I can catch a subway if it's too much out of your way."

"Not at all," Al assured her, but he was more vexed than pleased that she had not reminded him, and drove her directly there with hardly another word.

After he had left her and driven away he realized he had been barely more than civil to her and wondered at his own action. She did seem a little more lively when she was away from her sister. It occurred to him that she might have been making an opening for him to take her out for the rest of the evening. On the surface at least, he had been invited to supper for her sake.

A taxi sounded its horn loudly, startlingly behind him, Angrily he stepped on the accelerator, refusing to allow the offender to pass. Thoughts of Kit faded from his mind and he found himself again reflecting on the wrestling bout with Mary...How had it started?

Her glasses! They were still under the couch, perhaps broken when he had moved it to let her straighten the rug. Should he go back? He grinned to himself. There would be no

question of caution this time. Fred would certainly be out until at least two. Had Mary planned this after all? When she had asked him to supper, though, she had not known of Fred's job...Kit might very well have stayed the whole evening...In any case he had better go back to help her find the glasses...

By the time he entered the quiet hallway, dusk had fallen, and with the dusk, a stillness that was almost expectancy--as though the world had taken a nap on the couch until it was time for evening to begin. On his way up the stairs he faintly heard the small hiss and the click of the latch as the hall door closed, leaving only the sound of the crackling steps under his soft-soled shoes. He reached the door of Mary's apartment, paused an instant, drew a deep breath and let it out slowly, quietly. Quietly he knocked at the door. It swung open of its own accord. He stepped in.

It was somehow like coming into a darkened greenhouse. You seemed to feel a lushness, a ripeness, a full heaviness in the air, and you felt as though you would brush against dense, moist foliage if you moved a step. The shades were nearly down, and even with your eyes accustomed to the darkness you could not dispell the illusion. You closed the door firmly behind you. The snap of the latch was much louder than that of the hall door below.

"Mary?" In the darkened stillness he was conscious of

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research. It also mentions the scope of the study and the limitations. The second part of the paper discusses the methodology used in the study and the data collection process. The third part of the paper discusses the results of the study and the conclusions drawn from the data. The fourth part of the paper discusses the implications of the study and the recommendations for future research.

The study was conducted in a systematic and rigorous manner. The data was collected from a large sample of participants and was analyzed using statistical methods. The results of the study show that there is a significant relationship between the variables studied. The conclusions drawn from the data are based on the statistical analysis and are supported by the evidence. The implications of the study are discussed in detail and the recommendations for future research are provided.

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the fibre of his voice, the vibrations of it in his chest. He had spoken very softly. Perhaps she was in the bedroom. He took a step forward and the back of a chair met his hand. Grasping it to bring back the feel of reality he spoke again.

"Mary?"

Still no response...Maybe she had gone out for a few minutes. The darkness made him uneasy and he tried to remember where the light switch was. There was a faint cloth-like rustling from about where the couch should be.

"Is that you?" he asked.

"Yes. Can you see?" Her voice came through the darkness almost imperceptibly. A silent sound that no man can duplicate.

"No," he answered.

"Come sit down...on the couch...come slowly so you won't bump into anything."

He started across the room, inch by inch, keeping hold of the chair until he was past it safely. Every sound-- the scuff of his shoes on the rug, his hands as he passed them over the chair--seemed a hundred times louder than the trolley which rumbled by outside the window. Streetcars were of another world.

"Slowly...you're almost here." She reached out and touched him on the arm to help him the last step.

"It's like making a radio landing, ceiling zero. You'd

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be good in a control tower," he breathed as he sank down beside her, yet not touching. It was the longest phrase either of them had spoken and seemed somehow almost flippant--like whistling in church.

He could just see her head now--or its silhouette--against the open portion of the window at the end of the couch. He smiled to himself, remembering how she had seen his silhouette against the same window. There was a pillow behind him. He straightened it and leaned back comfortably. A waiting, but not a waiting...rather a quiescence. An expectancy, yet not an expectancy...the greenhouse...the night-blooming cereus.

"Your glasses..." he began.

"I found them."

Outside, somewhere in the distance, the sound of a church bell...prayer meeting...Friday night.

"Broken?"

"No."

She moved a little, still not touching him. A fold of her dress brushed his hand. The material was not the wool she had worn at supper but a soft cotton. He rubbed the corner of it between his fingers.

"Different dress," he commented.

No answer, no movement.

"It is a dress?"

the first of the month of January, 1881, at the
city of New York, New York, in the County of New York,
State of New York, I, the undersigned, a Justice of the Peace,
do hereby certify that the within and foregoing is a true and
correct copy of the original of the same, as the same appears
from the records of the said City of New York.

Witness my hand and seal of office at the City of New York,
this 1st day of January, 1881.

Justice of the Peace for the City of New York.

And I do hereby certify that the within and foregoing is a true and
correct copy of the original of the same, as the same appears
from the records of the said City of New York.

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Justice of the Peace for the City of New York.

"Of course." Not reproof, not even the usual sarcasm... a statement of fact... Naturally a dress. What else? He let the material drop from his hand and leaned back again in his corner.

"Where did you find your glasses?"

For a moment, no answer. She shifted herself on the couch. The faintness of perfume not noticed in the afternoon... He was about to ask the question again when she responded with one of her own.

"Is that why you came up here?"

The words struck him like an electric impact. Waiting now...not daring, yet slowly moving toward her...each muscle taut. Her skin cool...dew on the petals. Her lips cool. The soft cotton of her dress thinly over her full body...the far, far distant rumble of a trolley...the second shock--realization that her dress was the only raiment she wore...the night-blooming cereus.

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CHAPTER 10

He wondered in annoyance what had awakened him. What the hell time was it, anyhow. Whatever it was, it was too early. Yellow, unwelcome sunlight burned brazenly in at him through the window at the head of the bed, but if he were to pull down the shade or cover his head, Clifton would know he was awake. Through a barely opened eye he noticed with disgust that Clifton's bed was neatly made and Clifton, fully clothed, was lying on it reading a book. He closed the eye.

It was Sunday morning. That meant Church unless he could manage to be asleep until it was too late to get there on time. Lord knows, he thought, I need the sleep more than I need the religion. Maybe Cliff could drive them down this morning. He'd be glad enough of a chance to get his hands on my car.

Al had hardly had any sleep since Thursday. After leaving Mary Friday night he had not gone to bed at all but driven to Worcester and back, to work off his restlessness. He could not, of course, explain why he wanted to get to bed early last night, and had therefore been forced to play bridge with Cliff, his mother, and Mrs. Weaver from next door until after one when Julie came in from her date with Joe Mulligan. Now they would expect him to go to Church! Damn the Church--he wasn't going. Taking the chance of arousing Clifton's

suspicious that he was awake, he rolled over, pulling the blanket over his head.

"You awake, Pal?" Clifton laid down the book he was studying and sat up. No response from Al.

"It's after nine already."

NINE--NOON! I DON'T GIVE A DAMN IF IT'S TOMORROW MORNING.

"Your mother said I should get you up at nine because it takes you forty-five minutes to wake up on Sundays."

I COULD CHEERFULLY PUT YOU TO SLEEP FOR FORTY-FIVE MINUTES!

Clifton walked across the room, carefully stepping over the pile of Al's shirts in the middle of the floor. "Al," he said softly, shaking him by the shoulder, "it's almost 9:15."

"Okay." Al was pleased at how thoroughly reedy his voice sounded--obviously the voice of a man who needed more sleep. Clifton sighed and returned to his own bed, carefully stepping over the pile of shirts in the middle of the floor.

"I thought you were going to take your shirts down yesterday," he said.

OH, GO READ YOUR BIBLE.

Almost as though he were obeying Al's unspoken demand, Clifton picked up the textbook he had been reading, but he continued to look ruefully at the shirts. His own shirts were

carefully laid away in the drawer. His suits were neatly hung in the closet, his shoes lined up under the bed. He sighed again and leafed back one page to find the place where he had left off reading.

For fifteen serene minutes no sound disturbed Al's restless slumber except for the turning of the pages of Clifton's book. Vague, pleasant odors of coffee filtered up through the two stairwells from the kitchen below where Julie was preparing breakfast. Mrs. Manthorne's heels could be heard in innumerable trips back and forth between bedroom and bathroom.

The smell of coffee became much stronger, and Clifton's ears detected the sound of frying bacon. He glanced over the top of his book at his charge. Mrs. Manthorne had asked him to be sure to have Al up before he came down to eat.

"Al," he said dutifully. "It's 9:30."

Al did not answer nor was there any response to a shake on the shoulder. Clifton pulled the blankets from Al's head, still without success. Stepping back to survey the situation, his eye fell for the twentieth time on the pile of dirty shirts. Gleefully he gathered them up and proceeded to drop them one at a time on Al's upturned face.

Al stood it as long as he could, then sat up suddenly, angrily sweeping the pile of shirts back onto the floor. Clifton was being just a little too cute.

"Screw, you dreary bastard!" he shouted, "before I have

apoplexy."

"Oh," said Clifton stepping back. A calm, exasperating smile illuminated his face. "You were awake, then?"

"Go the hell away, will you?" said Al burying his face in his knees. He wanted a little sleep, that was all. Who had burdened him with this monster--this inhuman, walking alarm clock that knew no sympathy? What had he done to deserve this?

"You'll be late for Church."

"God-dammit, I'm not going to Church! I'm worn out... exhausted...sick...now get the hell out of here." He scooped up a shirt and threw it with all his might in the face of his tormentor who backed out the door muttering apologies, to go down the stairs and make his report to Mother. In three furious steps Al was at the door listening. Although her words were not audible, Mrs. Manthorne's voice plainly indicated her sentiments. He could picture her face...that expression of puzzled annoyance. She would be biting her lip. "Why do you children oppose me in everything I do?"

He heard her sigh and start slowly up the stairs to the third floor, the step more leaden than usual this morning... her arthritis.

The only retreat was back to bed. He turned away from the door, then went back a step to push it closed. A breeze from the open windows caught it, slamming it with more

vehemance than he had intended. Outside, he could hear his mother stop uncertainly. Then she knocked.

"Albert."

He buried his head under the covers again, thoroughly miserable. He hadn't meant to slam the door. Why the hell did she have to rub it in that way? She knew she didn't have to knock. When you hurt her you always hurt yourself, too. She'd never try to cover up--all the hurt was right there on the surface reproaching you.

Mrs. Manthorne opened the door and stood hesitantly at the threshold for a minute.

"Albert?"

"I didn't mean to slam the door," he said woodenly. "The wind caught it." His head was turned resolutely toward the wall...wallpaper...mustard yellow with little red floral figures...red leaves mismatched where the edges of the paper came together.

"Are you sick, Albert?" She sat down on the edge of the bed and tried to feel his forehead, but he ducked away truculently.

"No."

"Albert, there isn't much I ask you to do. One hour out of a week isn't very much time to give to your Church."

He rolled over on his back, braced his arms behind his head and looked at her silently as she talked on. Why did he

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make such a fuss about Church? If he no longer believed in what the Church taught, what did he believe, then? If he didn't know what he believed, why didn't he keep his mind open--keep it open by going to Church and listening and trying to pray. When she talked about prayer it always made him uncomfortable. She seemed to feel that you could just kneel down and pray the way you sat down for breakfast.

She had come upstairs in the middle of dressing, her makeup half on, wearing a slip but not a dress. The state of deshabilite made her talk about Church and God and prayer seem out of place. He noticed that the skin on her neck and shoulders was creased by millions of tiny wrinkles--the texture of facial tissue. Even with her underclothes on it was obvious that her breasts were flat and lifeless--the wasted, dried-up spring. He could not keep the warm, firm image of Mary from his mind. Someday she would be this way. Looking at the thin frail thing that was his mother, he shuddered slightly.

"If you can't go for your own good, I should think you'd do it for me and especially for Julie. She needs the feel of a family. Having your father die and you away has made it harder for her than you know." She stopped to stare vacantly out the window, biting her lip. Slowly her eyes began to fill up with tears. "It meant so much to your father when you joined the Church. He'd be so disappointed if he could see you now." The tears brimmed over and spilled down her cheek

making little wet trails as they ran.

"Yes, Mother."

This was the first emotional reference to Father since vacation. Al had noticed with satisfaction how she had left the subject unmentioned, but now it apparently was back in circulation. There were many times when Al wished he could stop her talking--she never seemed to know when to stop of her own accord--but never so much as when she spoke of Father. Father was a subject never mentioned with a dry eye, never without a sigh of loneliness and of regret at his unrealized ambitions--ambitions which had been laid like a wreath on Al's head after Father's death.

What was Father to Mother? A sterile tomb-like library on the second floor. A hat that was never moved from the shelf in the hall closet. A reason that Al should go to Church--or do almost anything. Father was not often used as a persuasive weapon--only in extreme cases. Father was more, too...the reason the house had never been sold...the reason Mother stayed up nights and took naps in the daytime...the reason she was always tired...the reason she could not put on weight. Father, the source of all evil.

"I know you don't like me to talk about your Father," she said, "but I want to keep him alive for you. You were so young when he died."

Young, hell! He had been eighteen years old. The

memory of those last days of Dad's life could never be altered by anything she could say or do.

Dad had dropped out of sight one night, and it was not until three days later that they had discovered he was in a hospital in Fall River, in a coma from a cerebral hemorrhage. How he got to Fall River no one ever knew. It had taken three days to trace his identity through a laundry mark on his shirt. Almost a lark at first, having the news come in over long distance wire, racing over Route 138 at night...the white splash of the headlights on the cement...the furry little bushes whisking by at the roadside. Serious illness. Urgent. Emergency. The meaning of cerebral hemorrhage was vague...the conception of death beyond his grasp. He dimly remembered thinking, as he drove, how it would be if Dad should die-- picturing his own future role as the Strong Right Arm of his mother in her Time of Tribulation.

The hospital. Small, dingy...dirty brick walls surrounded by dirty brick walls...yellow, brown trimmed wards full of shrunken old men and an alcoholic with delerium tremens... the dimly lighted solarium with two beds, one empty, one occupied by a wizened, grizzled little man with his arm strapped to a plank...his father.

No longer a lark.

This was not Dad. This was what was left of Dad after someone had taken a magnifying glass and concentrated the sun's

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rays on him until he was withered and shrivelled like a brown autumn leaf...this was what was left after thirty years of dying since last Thursday.

Unconscious, unshaven, his left arm and leg crippled so that when he tried to move in his sleep it was like seeing the struggling of an ant someone had stepped on but not killed. One unseeing eye was half open, the eyeball traveling slowly, continuously back and forth, left to right, right to left. Al could see the other eyeball move where the light from the dim bulb reflected on the tight skin of the eyelid. Once he had reached out to touch his hand. Cold. Congestion...the breathing slow and irregular. It took him eight days to die.

All through the ordeal of the hospital, the funeral, the first coming home to the empty house, Al had not broken down once. He ran errands, answered the phone, helped with meals, always completely cheerful. Some of his aunts even thought he was callous. Aunt Edith and Aunt Alice wept at the casket. Mother had to be taken outside during the funeral. Al sat through it dry-eyed--and a week later was forced to bed with a prolonged series of violent attacks of nausea. This was the week he and Dad were to have gone fishing in New Hampshire. Too young to remember! As though the hat in the hall closet could make any difference.

"Your father would be so disappointed," she repeated.

"It's no go, Mother," he said. "Maybe next Sunday."

If he gave in now, Father's disappointment would be employed against him every Sunday morning for the rest of the year.

"There's no sense in my going, then." She stood up, biting her lip to keep back the tears. "I might as well not have bothered to get up...stayed in bed and been a damn heathen."

Al made no attempt to answer nor argue but watched his mother with calm eyes as she stood for a full minute, staring out the window, the portrait of disappointment. From the kitchen came the sound of Clifton's laughter. Finally, sighing heavily, Mrs. Manthorne turned and left the room. As she descended the stairs her step was more leaden than before. The slam of a door from below.

"Your Father would be so disappointed..." An ironic smile crossed Al's face as he thought how true it was, considering last Friday night, the girls in Germany. Would Dad have understood? It was Mary's choice as well as Al's. Fred need never know, and there would never be a repetition. No harm done.

Night before last the same thought had occurred to him, and he had tried in vain, then as now, to imagine what his father's reaction would have been. Perhaps Dad did know. Al could not help imagining sometimes that his father's spirit was somewhere near...invisible...watching him. Uncomfortable thought. Sexual activity was not graceful.

He lowered the shade in the window by his head and slid

down under the covers again, but he didn't feel sleepy any more. The pillow was uncomfortable. He punched it several times, tried it again, then threw it on the floor in disgust. He was too hot. The sheets tangled around his sweaty feet and pulled out at the bottom.

"Albie." It was his sister calling from the bottom of the stairs.

Goddamn the sheets. Goddamn the sunlight. Goddamn his mother. Goddamn--

"Albie." She was half way up the stairs.

Al raised himself on his elbows and shut his eyes tightly. "I told Clifton. I told Mother. Now I'll tell you," he brayed, "I'm not going to Church. I refuse to go to Church. I absolutely, positively, utterly refuse to go to Church. I..."

During this recital Julie had bounced up the rest of the stairs and into the room, a broad grin on her face. She stepped to the bed, pushed him back to a lying position and seated herself on his chest.

"Umph," he said. "I won't do it."

"Be still."

"I won't go. I'm tired. It's too late."

"Shut up!" The grin widened. The tone loud, commanding, pleasant. "If you'll be still a moment, I'd like to say that I don't care if you shoot the minister. What I want to ask

The first part of the book is devoted to a general introduction to the subject of the history of the English language. It begins with a discussion of the early forms of the language, such as Old English, Middle English, and Modern English. The author then discusses the influence of various factors on the development of the language, including contact with other languages, social changes, and technological advances. The second part of the book is a detailed study of the history of the English language from the 15th to the 18th century. It covers the period of the Renaissance, the Elizabethan era, and the Restoration. The author discusses the changes in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation during this period. The third part of the book is a study of the history of the English language from the 18th to the 20th century. It covers the period of the 18th century, the 19th century, and the 20th century. The author discusses the changes in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation during this period. The fourth part of the book is a study of the history of the English language from the 20th century to the present. It covers the period of the 20th century and the 21st century. The author discusses the changes in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation during this period. The book is written in a clear and concise style, and it is well illustrated with examples of the language. It is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the history of the English language.

you is whether you will come down for breakfast or if you want it brought up."

"I'm not hungry."

"Shut up. Which way will you have it?"

"Neither." He pushed her gently from his chest and turned back to examining the wall paper but without as much enthusiasm.

"You're sick," Julie decided starting for the door.

"I'll bring it up."

"No," he said. "No. I'll come. Just give me time to get my pants on."

Twenty minutes later Al decided that breakfast had been worth coming down for. Julie knew how to fry eggs...get the pan good and hot and cook 'em fast. The coffee was good... strong and hot. He took a second cup and lighted one of Julie's cigarettes.

He forgave everyone--Clifton, Mother, Julie. It always gave him a headache when he overslept, anyhow. Somebody once said that you can't make up lost sleep. He looked at the clock. It was 10:15.

"Look, kids," he said rising, "I'll run up and grab a shirt and give you a ride down to Church. Where's Mother-- has she eaten yet?" He had passed his mother's bedroom on the way down without pausing or glancing in.

"She won't eat much breakfast, anyhow," said Julie.

"I'll give her a cup of coffee when she comes down and we'll be able to make it on time."

"Okay, I'll tell her." As Al went through the hallway and up the big front stairs, he reflected that he really had been petty this morning and tried to think of the real reason he had not wanted to go. Mostly it was the dislike of being pushed into things, he supposed. Glancing at his watch he saw it was too late to go with them, now. In any case he would apologize to Mother, and giving her a ride down would help assuage her feelings. She didn't get to go out much, after all, and holding the family together meant so much to her...but you can't just give in when they back you into a corner.

He gently opened the door to her bedroom and spoke to her, but she was not there. Perhaps in the bathroom.

"Mother?" Before he had looked into the bathroom he knew she was not there either. The sunlight poured in, brightly reflecting on the yellow-and-black linoleum floor. The faint sound of voices coming up through the hot air register from the kitchen made the room seem even more deserted. The water in the sink was dripping; he turned it off snugly.

Unless she were doing something in Julie's bedroom, there was only one place where she could be--Father's room. Al's lips tightened at the thought. On other occasions when she was extremely hurt or displeased she had locked herself

in Father's room. One time she had stayed inside two full days, refusing even to speak to anyone.

The door to the room was in the darkest corner of the hallway, and until he was standing at the threshold he could not be sure that it was closed. He reached to the knob, then drew his hand back. Despite himself he felt as he had ten years ago when Father was in his study and not to be bothered. When Father was busy, he was never disturbed. Nothing short of fire could have altered the rule. Even through the closed door he could faintly smell the musty odor of old dust-laden books whose shiny bindings were beginning to crack with age... a faint rustling, as of a sleeve drawn across the upholstered arm of a chair. She was in there.

"Mother?" He lowered his voice, annoyed with himself for doing so.

"Come in," she said. "The door is unlocked." Her voice was barely audible, yet each word was distinct.

He stepped in, leaving the door open...a passageway back to reality where there would be sunlight and young voices and the smell of breakfast cooking.

"Close the door, please." The shades were three quarters drawn, and even though he had come from a darkened corner of the hallway it was difficult for him to see for a moment. A thick pine tree obscured what little light could pass through the shaded windows--windows never opened. She was sitting in

the big chair slumped down slightly, staring into the empty fireplace. Her position and the darkness made her look older, somehow.

"I'm only staying a minute," he said. His original impulse to apologize was still in his mind, but before he could say anything she spoke again.

"You mustn't cross me like that again, Albert--it takes too much out of me. It's all I can do to keep going with my work...to keep a home for you and Julie, but when you children cross me it takes all the strength and vitality right out of me. What I ask you to do is not unreasonable; I try my best to do as your father would have done. You children will have to abide by what I say or I can't go on."

As she spoke, all Al's desire to apologize drained away. The sympathy turned to disgust and his one desire was to escape, to leave this house full of gloomy people in dead, mouldy rooms and never come back. For the first time since Dad died, he felt that hysterical nausea rising in his throat.

"Julie has some coffee ready for you," he said, forcing his voice to be steady. "I'm going to take you all down to Church if you'd like to go."

"No," she said quietly. "I'm too tired now. I'm going back to bed in a few minutes."

Without another word he turned and left the room. The nausea was much stronger now. Quickly he ran into the bathroom,

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the transparency and accountability of the organization. The document also outlines the procedures for handling financial data, including the use of standardized forms and the regular review of accounts.

In the second part, the focus shifts to the management of human resources. It discusses the need for a clear and concise job description for all positions, as well as the importance of providing ongoing training and development opportunities for employees. The document also addresses the issue of employee performance, suggesting that regular evaluations should be conducted to ensure that all staff are meeting the required standards.

The third part of the document deals with the organization's legal and regulatory obligations. It highlights the importance of staying up-to-date with all relevant laws and regulations, and provides guidance on how to ensure compliance. This includes the need for regular audits and the implementation of robust internal controls to prevent any potential legal issues.

Finally, the document concludes with a section on the organization's overall mission and vision. It reiterates the commitment to excellence and the dedication to providing high-quality services to all stakeholders. The document also expresses the organization's confidence in its ability to overcome any challenges and achieve its long-term goals.

seated himself on the edge of the bath tub to wait. Nothing.

Faintly from the hallway came the sound of his mother closing herself back into the room. The click of the lock.

Then he was sick.

A few minutes later he was at the kitchen door, still buttoning his shirt at the top. Julie and Clifton both looked up in surprise; he had come so quietly neither of them had heard him.

"Mother says she isn't going," he said. "If you two want a ride, I'll be leaving right away."

"You look funny," said Julie. "Is anything wrong?"

"No." He turned away, and as he went out the front door he could hear them getting ready to follow.

The top of the car had been left open all night, but the dew had dried long ago under the hot September sun. When he climbed in he could feel the heat of the leather through his clothing. The faint, acrid odor of gasoline.

The engine responded instantly, and he held the accelerator down almost to the floorboard for a moment, making a very satisfactory roar that must have rattled the windows in Father's room. He relaxed his foot. The sound died to an even purr.

Bombo, ears flapping, loped around from the back of the house and executed what was intended to be a smooth leap into

the seat beside his master. His speed carried him over the door, but he landed on his chin. Al hugged him affectionately for a moment, then pushed him into the back seat to make room for Julie and Clifton who had come out.

Three minutes later they had traversed a mile of heavy traffic at the imminent danger of being arrested for speeding and disturbing the peace. As they roared along, Al pictured with grim satisfaction his mother coming down to bail him out of prison.

"Are you going to pick us up after Church?" Julie asked as he let them out.

"No."

"Okay, okay. You don't have to snap at me. When will you be home?"

"I don't know." The engine was breathing restlessly under his foot.

"I don't suppose you know where you're going."

"No," he repeated sullenly.

She smiled, nevertheless, and waved after him as he pulled out into traffic. He saw her in the mirror and wished he had been more pleasant, but Julie would understand.

Fifteen minutes later Al and Bombo had crossed the Charles River and put behind them the boulevard that ran along the water's edge without so much as a glance at the scenery. A mile later they turned up the long, semicircular driveway that

led to the home of Nicky Luce. It was a grandiose white colonial mansion with a front porch two stories high and four supporting Corinthian columns. Nicky sat on the edge of the verandah sunning himself and smiled as Al drew to a stop ten feet away.

"Good morning. I've been waiting for you."

"Did you call the house?" Al asked.

"No." Nicky's blue eyes smiled out mischievously from behind his tortoise-shell spectacles.

"How?..."

"I saw an omen--an ominous omen," said Nicky savoring the vowel sounds. He rose lazily and came to sit in the front seat. "I saw an old man with a forked beard and a checkered waistcoat going by with a perambulator, and I knew...I knew." He looked at Al over the top of his spectacles. "I'm very wise today."

"Hm," said Al dubiously. "Where are your family?"

"Off." Nicky waved his hand airily. "They've gone with the car and left me quite destitute. That's how I really knew you were coming. I had to get away, and you've come to deliver me."

"No, Goddammit, we're not going anywhere!"

"Oh dear!"

"There's no place left to go," Al added gloomily.

"Who has incurred your wrath today?"

"Nobody--everybody. There's just no goddam sense trying

to be nice to anyone. Nobody's worth it." As he spoke, Al realized he was talking nonsense but it was a relief to get it off his chest with someone who wouldn't take it seriously and get his feelings hurt. The thought of his mother's reactions to such statements started him again.

"For a long time," he said more calmly, "I've had a sort of philosophy--the philosophy of Me. You know--when I began, life began; when I die, life ends. My happiness is important. If I get it by making other people happy, that's okay too. Today I don't want to make anybody happy."

Nicky lay back dreamily in the seat wearing his wisest expression. He waited until Al's voice trailed off, watching a small cotton cloud disappear beyond the edge of the roof. "There's one thing you haven't taken into account," he said pausing to give the word weight. "Love."

Al snorted.

"Very well, you'll see. You never take my word for anything."

"I wish I had," Al said dejectedly. "I could have been in some clean little New Hampshire town--my own master--scurrying around to collect local society notes and obituaries for the Daily Bugle."

"You still could."

"No I couldn't. I'm tied to home now with Clifton there... and Mother. When you come right down to it, I never could have

gone even before I registered for classes. I'm tied to home as surely as though I had a ball and chain. I haven't the guts to walk out. Army life was unbounded freedom compared to this insidious, intangible servitude...I mean it," he added as he caught a trace of amusement on Nicky's face.

"Poor Al," said Nicky soothingly. "You're upset. What you need is one of my expertly blended martinis with a background of a William Walton Concerto." He climbed back out of the car and led the way into the house.

"Come," he said.

CHAPTER 11

"What a funny-looking duck!" said Julie, seating herself on the river bank. She looked up at Mulligan uncertainly. He had not wanted to come to the Esplanade this afternoon, but he dropped down beside her now without further objection.

"It's a seagull," he said. "You're a hell of a bad sailor."

"Oh." She watched one of the small excursion boats push it's way upstream through the black choppy water. Only a handful of people were on board--the season was nearly ended and today it threatened to rain any minute. The wind was blowing inland, carrying with it the fresh salt flavor of the ocean.

"Smells good, doesn't it," she said.

"It stinks."

"You're in a sour mood today, aren't you?" She ruffled his hair playfully. "It smells okay to me."

He snorted contemptuously. "Sea air!"

"I want to go down to the sea, again

To the lonely sea and the sky'..." she began.

"Don't be childish, Julie...not any more than you have to."

There was a silence for several minutes. In the two weeks she had known him, he had turned sour--bitterly sarcastic --on three different occasions without apparent reason. Sunday

night he had completely lost his temper, given her a dime for the subway home, and stalked off, only to appear the following morning with a gardenia as peace-offering. By now she was becoming accustomed to his temperment, and when you got used to it it was almost fun to be alternately stormed at, then idolized. If he had been a little man, she could not have put up with him, but his tremendous burly frame and his fiery, brutal vitality made these violent self-battles more like storms at sea than childish tantrums.

"Well, we're here now," he said finally. "Why don't you take off your Gawd-damned shoes and socks and go wading?"

"You're being mean," said Julie. "Just because I wouldn't go up to the room with you."

"You can just stop that nonsense. I'm sick of your treating me in this stupid, supercilious manner. I hate coyness in women. When I first saw you I liked you because you were frank and direct." He was silent for a moment, seeing her hurt expression. Presently he continued in a calmer tone. "I'm not going to touch you if you don't want me to, Julie. I shall leave the door unlocked and sit on the floor and read to you from the corner if it makes you happy."

"What's wrong with the chair?"

"I don't have a chair."

"Where do you write?"

"In bed."

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"Oh." She pried a stone out of its damp niche in the sod and tossed it into the water.

"You throw like a girl," he growled, rolling over onto his back.

Looking down at him, Julie reflected for the hundreth time what a giant of a man he was...his khaki shirt open at the neck and his sleeves rolled up to reveal his heavy, freckled arms. His hands, however, seemed to be of an altogether different person--the long fingers with closely clipped nails, and he wore a curiously delicate ring, a tiny gold serpent coiled three times around his fourth finger. A network of veins like a detail map stood out on the back of the hand Julie could see. She shivered slightly.

There was a little red and blue anchor tattooed on his forearm which he usually made a point to keep hidden. "It's poor taste, like girls' anklets or discharge buttons. I never remember having gotten it. I woke up one morning on ship and the damn thing was there." Julie liked his anchor, though. She had never known anyone who had been tattooed before. Almost everything about him was different. Every place he took her, each one of his friends, was a new experience. At first she had balked at these unfamiliarities, but gradually she gained faith in him--at least she always ended up by tagging along. Going to his room however, was another thing.

"What are you staring at?" he asked.

"You. Can you sing, Joe?"

"Sing?" He looked faintly amused. He was apt to look faintly amused at anything. "No, I can't even carry a tune. Why?"

"I just wondered. When you speak your voice is so... reedy, almost. Don't you like music?"

Joe's look plainly indicated that this was an irrelevant question. "Look," he said. "How long are we going to sit down here and kill time?"

"If you have something to do," said Julie stiffly, "don't let me keep you."

"Don't be stuffy. Gawd-dammit, Julie, you're so skittish about everything. Why don't you want to come with me?"

"Because."

His disgusted glare was lost on her. She was absorbed in pulling up tufts of grass by the roots.

"I suppose you're reciting your mother's maxims to yourself. 'Never go with a man to his room or he'll ravish you on the spot.'"

"You'd like to." She pulled up another tuft of grass and let the blades slip down between her fingers slowly.

"My dear girl! Of course I'd like to but I'm certainly not going to force myself on you. Dammit, Julie, grow up. You're capable of taking care of yourself. How in God's name are we to establish any sort of a rapport if you keep running

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off to the other side of the pasture like a suspicious heifer?"

She liked the way he always called her by name. Nobody else ever did that, either. It made what he said apply directly to her and to no one else. "What does rapport mean, Joe?"

He explained briefly, then lapsed back into silence. Maybe he was right, she thought. He didn't have any other place to take her home to, and she knew him well enough to trust him not to use force. Perhaps she would be the untrustworthy one.

"If I went up with you, you'd never speak to me again."

"For Christ's sake!" His habitual look of amusement changed to a scowl.

"That's what Mother says."

"Your Mother is a fool."

"She is not. You shouldn't say those things, Joe."

"Julie, use your intelligence. Your Mother is a lovely woman. If you swallow everything she says, I'm not going to make myself look silly by trying to convince you otherwise. The hell with it--let's go to the movies." He looked at her expectantly but she went back to picking grass.

"You certainly wouldn't want to marry me," she said after a moment.

"Now you're being coy again. What the hell has marriage got to do with it. I don't want to marry anybody. I'm very fond of you, Julie, although I'm sure I don't know why. I

The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the car was the
familiarity of the air. It felt like I had been here before, even though
I had never before. The sun was shining brightly, and the birds were
singing. It was a beautiful day, and I was feeling good. I was
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suppose it's because you're so dumb and need someone to keep you from bumping into things. If I ever did marry you, though, your chastity wouldn't enter into it unless you were an uncontrollable nymphomaniac or something."

"Maybe I would be."

"Don't worry about it. You'd know by now if you were. So would a lot of other people."

"That's another thing," she said. "Men talk."

Joe closed his eyes tightly and shook his head in despair. "Please, Julie, use what little intelligence you have. Do you picture me running out behind the barn with all the other nasty little boys--saying nasty things about Julie Manthorne? Besides, if you feel that sleeping with me is shameful, don't do it. I can't seem to get it through your head that going to my room doesn't mean that we jump into bed."

"I don't know what to think. You make it all sound so logical--you and my brother."

Mulligan relaxed again. The amusement returned to his eyes. "Why, what does your brother think?" he asked.

"I could never put into words. He doesn't do very well either, for that matter, but the idea is about the same--or the result is."

Suddenly Julie was aware that someone was standing behind them, but before she could turn the person's voice established her identity. "If it ain't my little swimming-camp pal! Hi,

kid, what brings you around here?"

Julie caught a look of pained annoyance on Mulligan's face as she turned to greet the newcomer. It was Jean Brophy, the Jean Brophy of Camp Marquette, the Jean Brophy of the nervous, thick hands with big toes for thumbs. Of all the people Julie never wanted to see again only Fran Connors, the head life guard, rated before Jean Brophy. Last summer was supposed to be a thing of the past; now it came crowding back, carrying its damp loneliness and uncertainty and its vague sense of failure. Julie was very glad that Joe was sitting beside her on the grass.

"Hello, Jean," she said, not quite matching Jean's enthusiasm. "I'd like to have you meet Joe Mulligan. We both go to Boston City College."

Jean gave a little gasp as Joe stood up. "Hello, Joe," she said. "I didn't recognize you from behind. So you've finally landed in school?"

Thinking back on the situation later, Julie could not remember getting to her feet, but only that she had suddenly been standing beside Joe, holding his arm.

"You already know each other?" she asked, feeling as she spoke how stupid the question was. They not only knew each other; their friendship had obviously been one of intimate long-standing.

"She used to..." began Joe.

"Once upon a time there was a two-storey house," Jean said dreamily. "The four Brophys lived upstairs and thirty-five Mulligans lived below us. We practically grew up together. My old man and his used to go out every Saturday night and get potted...but why are we standing up?"

"That's a nice dress for grass stains," said Julie pointedly.

"This old rag? Don't be silly."

This old rag was a smart grey linen gown that cost two or three times as much as Julie's. She also had matching high-heeled shoes and handbag, and on her blond head was a dainty grey hat. Julie noticed that her hair was a little blonder than it had been at camp.

Joe reluctantly sat down at Julie's left, and Jean followed suit, sitting at Joe's left so that he was squarely between them and forced to turn his back on Julie to answer Jean's questions.

"So you're a schoolboy," Jean repeated. "You always used to say a writer didn't belong in school...he ought to get out and see life. What happened, did life scare you when you got a good look at it or have you come back to the ivy covered walls to write you reminiscences?"

"Neither, I guess," Joe said. He seemed to change before her; he neither stormed nor swore. Even his mannerism of perpetual amusement dropped away as though Jean's presence

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carried him back to a shy awkward boyishness. "I figured I'd better get some schooling as long as the G. I. Bill offered it to me."

"Did you write the Great American Novel yet?"

"Not yet." Joe rolled over on his back and looked up at the sky in an effort to face them both at once. "How come you and Jean know each other?" he asked Julie.

"Camp," said Julie. "We..."

"She was teaching swimming with me last summer, weren't you, kid? Are you going back next year?"

"I don't think so." Julie hoped the subject would drop there.

"Oh that's right. They gave you a hard time of it, didn't they? I really don't think they were fair to you, though, telling you you didn't have what it took to be a teacher. You were sick a lot, weren't you?"

"No," said Julie in a positive tone. "My only trouble was that I can't yell." She was tempted to add something about Miss Connors' playing favorites, but it would have sounded to Joe as though she were making excuses.

"How are all your family, Jean?" asked Joe. Julie glared at the back of his head.

"Pretty well. I go back to see them every week. You ought to go see your folks too, Joe. You may be bitter or think they don't care about you, but you're wrong. Your mother,

The first part of the document is a letter from the President of the United States to the Congress, dated January 3, 1862. The letter is signed by Abraham Lincoln and is addressed to the Senate and House of Representatives. The letter discusses the state of the Union and the progress of the war against the Confederacy. It also mentions the President's efforts to maintain the Union and his commitment to the principles of liberty and justice for all.

The second part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the War Department, dated January 10, 1862. The report is signed by Edwin M. Stanton and is addressed to the President. The report discusses the military situation in the South and the progress of the war. It also mentions the Secretary's efforts to maintain the Union and his commitment to the principles of liberty and justice for all.

The third part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Navy, dated January 15, 1862. The report is signed by Gideon Welles and is addressed to the President. The report discusses the naval situation in the South and the progress of the war. It also mentions the Secretary's efforts to maintain the Union and his commitment to the principles of liberty and justice for all.

The fourth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Treasury, dated January 20, 1862. The report is signed by Salmon P. Chase and is addressed to the President. The report discusses the financial situation in the South and the progress of the war. It also mentions the Secretary's efforts to maintain the Union and his commitment to the principles of liberty and justice for all.

The fifth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Interior, dated January 25, 1862. The report is signed by Caleb B. Smith and is addressed to the President. The report discusses the land situation in the South and the progress of the war. It also mentions the Secretary's efforts to maintain the Union and his commitment to the principles of liberty and justice for all.

The sixth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the War, dated February 1, 1862. The report is signed by Edwin M. Stanton and is addressed to the President. The report discusses the military situation in the South and the progress of the war. It also mentions the Secretary's efforts to maintain the Union and his commitment to the principles of liberty and justice for all.

The seventh part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Navy, dated February 5, 1862. The report is signed by Gideon Welles and is addressed to the President. The report discusses the naval situation in the South and the progress of the war. It also mentions the Secretary's efforts to maintain the Union and his commitment to the principles of liberty and justice for all.

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especially, misses you. She isn't getting any younger, you know."

"I was back once after I was discharged. That was enough." Joe sat up restlessly and braced his arms behind him. "Aren't you living home any more, either?"

"Oh no. Since I've started modeling in town I've taken an apartment. It's over on Fairfield Street. You ought to come over sometime." She said smiling brightly. Julie was not included in the smile. "My roommate is a model too. We're hoping to get a break in the next six months, and if we do it means New York, so if you want to see us you'd better not wait too long."

"Where did you say it was?"

This was too much for Julie. Maybe he was being polite; maybe he wasn't. If they were going to plan their little get-together they could do it alone. She gathered up her books and got to her feet.

"Going somewhere, kid?" Jean asked looking up calmly.

To see her, thought Julie grimly, you'd think I were the unwelcome one who came breaking in. If Joe sits there two seconds longer I'll go away and never come within fifty miles of him again. I'll change to another school. I'll...

Joe stood up and dropped his arm over Julie's shoulders.

"Yes we are going," said Julie.

"My way perhaps?" Jean picked herself up and gave her

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skirt a careless one-handed brush.

"No," said Julie slowly. "As a matter of fact we had just stopped for a minute to enjoy the view on our way up to Joe's room...It's been nice seeing you, Jean."

"Certainly has. Nice seeing you too, Joe."

"M," said Joe taking a firm grip on Julie's arm as they left. "I'm sorry, Julie," he said as soon as they were out of earshot. "I have to be polite to her. She'll go blab to my family, and while in a way I don't give a damn, I hate to give her any more to work on than I have to. You understand, don't you?"

Julie nodded looking at the ground. Tears were filling up her eyes. She didn't want Joe to see them but they ran down under her glasses and dripped off her cheek.

"You don't want to come to the room, honey," he said gently. "She forced you into it."

"How far is it?" Julie asked.

"About three blocks."

"Let's hurry. The rain's liable to start any minute."

CHAPTER 12

"This is the greatest," said Tommy balancing his milk bottle between his knees to unwrap his sandwich. "Eating in the smoker is a drag, for Chrisake. Those peasants in there do everything but put their feet in your mouth. It's like Coney Island."

It was Wednesday. Al had asked a few of his friends out to eat in the car in order to escape the usual noon-day jam at school. Besides Tommy there were the brothers Chester and Virgil Scruggs and Kit Porterfield. Kit did not usually eat with the boys, but she had been talking to Chester when they left the building, and it was easier to ask her than to leave her behind.

Al's friends were an odd assortment. Chester Scruggs was an entirely amiable, untidy, round-faced person who never offended anyone. Tommy was a rather brilliant meticulous misanthrope who went out of his way to offend everyone. Virgil hardly ever said anything. Most people underestimated him, but he somehow managed to have dozens of useful friends and enough money to support himself and Chester comfortably.

"So you like my car," Al said. "I've got a dog to go with it."

"I did indeed by no means intend to convey the impression that I liked your car, Manthorne," said Tommy. His speech was

invariably carefully-worded rhetoric, spoken with the most acidulous emphasis.

"Why? What's wrong with it? It runs good," Al said defensively.

"Not 'good', Manthorne....'well'."

"How does your dog run?" asked Chester from the back seat.

"I still don't see what's wrong with the car," Al maintained.

"I suppose it's the right thing for you, Manthorne," said Tommy giving it a critical glance of appraisal. "However.. it's a trifle conventional. Nine cylinders and a tonneau, for Chrisake. Where's you fox-tail?"

"Aw..." Al turned to the back seat. One expected Tommy to be critical of everything whether or not he liked it, but too much of Al's pride was wrapped up in the car for him to go along with the joke.

"There is among us," announced Chester, "one who feels that it was not 'better to have loved and lost'." Today Chester's speech was rhetorical, too.

"You?" said Al to Virgil.

Virgil shook his head soberly. "Too young, yet."

"Aha!" said Tommy. "Little Kit has been ejected from her place in her lieutenant's heart by a Springfield strumpet."

Her face betrayed no emotion of any sort to Al who was

immediately ready to sympathize.

"Do you really have a lieutenant?" he asked.

"I did." She smiled somewhat wanly.

"Her lieutenant lusted for her," persisted Tommy ruthlessly, "but she held out so long that he gave her up as a lost cause."

Kit smiled again to no one in particular. "He's an ex-lieutenant--goes to school, now."

"Who left whom?" Al asked her, trying to get enough sympathy into his voice to keep from alienating her, yet to sound indifferent enough to keep from being laughed at by the others.

"He left me."

"I suppose," said Chester, "that we should regard this matter less lightly, but you look so little the part of the broken woman."

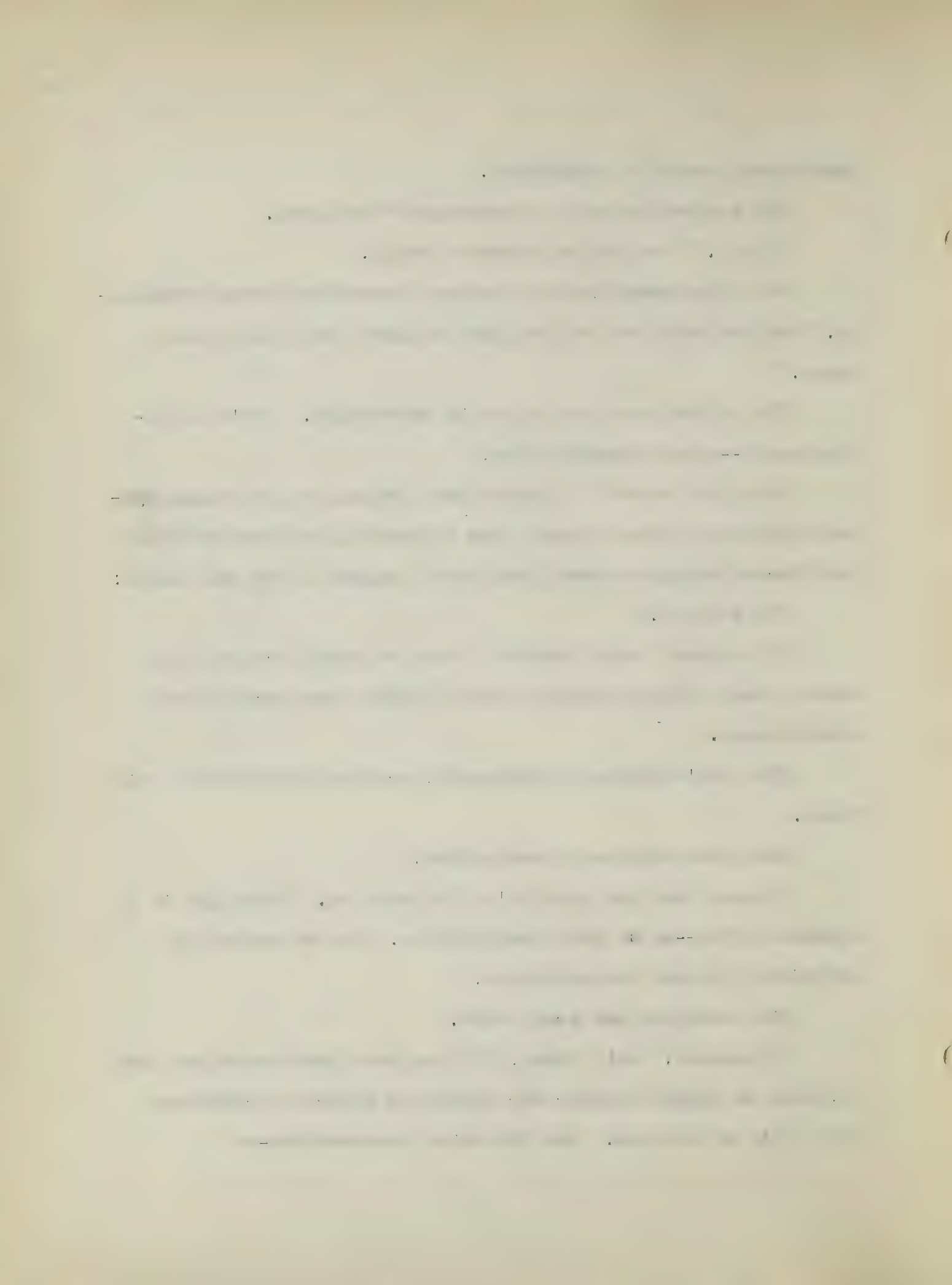
"She isn't taking it seriously, are you little Kit?" said Tommy.

She shook her head, then nodded.

"In any case you shouldn't," he went on. "This man is a complete idiot--or so you described him. You're better off unfettered by such encumbrances."

Kit attempted one more smile.

"I suppose," said Tommy, "if you have your heart set upon it, that we should belabor our brains in effort to reinstate you in his affections. Was his edict irrevocable--an



untimatum?"

"I guess so. It sounded pretty final."

"Maybe he was the wrong person for you," Al suggested.

"If his love can't bear the separation it may not be worth having. There's plenty..."

"We can do without your cracker-box philosophy, Manthorne," said Tommy. "Here's a woman in a tragic situation, and you're all set to prate about other fish in the sea. I'm not utterly without sympathy or understanding of these things you know."

"Okay, okay," said Al undaunted. "I was trying to say that if she could send him back his letters or pin or something, maybe he'd be remorseful when he saw what he was losing, and he'd change his mind."

"That's not what you started to say, Al."

"It's a feasible plan, however," said Chester. "What have you got to give back to him, honey?"

"Nothing," she said shaking her head.

"Oh think," said Chester. "There must be something... pins, pictures, rings, clothing. Hasn't he given you anything you could send back with a bitter little note.. 'This is the end'?"

All four of them were now peering earnestly into her face. Despite herself she was momentarily amused. "I can't think of a thing," she said after a puzzled silence.

"Didn't he ever even write to you?" Al asked.

"No. We saw each other every couple of weeks so he didn't bother much."

During the discussion Virgil had been sitting quietly listening to everything that was said, with his usual inscrutable expression. He made a small, indescribable noise now which signified that he wished to speak. Everyone was silent; Virgil was apt to say unusual things.

"Would it be possible," he began, "to go out and buy something he might have given you, then mail it to him as though he had given it to you?"

There was an awed admiring silence. Virgil, having spoken his piece, retired modestly to his corner.

"That would be the greatest," said Chester finally. "Not only would he be filled with remorse by the finality of it all, he'd be conscience-stricken because he couldn't remember having given it to her."

"No," said Kit in a final tone.

"Won't do, eh?" said Tommy after another silence.

"Did he ever loan you anything?" Al asked as a last recourse. It had been his plan originally and he hated to see it die.

"Well, yes, sort of."

"Aha!" shouted Tommy. "What was it?"

"A toboggan."

Looks of consternation passed over everyone's face but

Virgil's. Virgil remained inscrutable.

"What sort of note do you send when returning a toboggan?" mused Tommy. "'This toboggan reminded me of you so I'm returning it.' No, that's nowhere."

"Perhaps you could just send it without any note," Al suggested.

"Would he get the point?" asked Chester doubtfully. "Toboggans are pretty gross articles."

"Of course," decided Tommy giving up the last hope of practicality. "Think of the irony in receiving an anonymous toboggan."

"This, then, is the solution," pronounced Chester solemnly.

"The greatest, by God!"

"We're regular Dorothy Dixes. We ought to go into the business."

During this round of self-appraisal Kit was momentarily forgotten, but suddenly she burst into tears.

"I think you're all perfectly foul!" she said vehemently, gathering up her books. Without further ado she climbed over Virgil and out of the car and stalked away. They watched her in silence until she disappeared around the corner toward school.

"I'll be damned," said Al softly. "I didn't realize she was so upset."

Tommy snorted indignantly.

"What time is it?" Al asked, reaching for his notebook.

"Leave her alone," Tommy advised. "She'll get over it, for Chrisake. These Goddamned women--they're all a drag."

"I was going in anyhow," Al said as he got out. "I probably won't find her...Don't leave your garbage in the car when you're through," he called back over his shoulder as he started hurriedly off in the direction Kit had taken.

A minute later he mounted the front steps to the school building without having caught sight of her. She was not to be seen on the "Marble" not in the student lounge. Al stopped a moment to watch a hand of bridge, getting a grim satisfaction from seeing the girl who played the hand set three tricks. That morning he had spent an uncomfortable two hours as her partner. Still no sign of Kit.

He wandered back to the front door with a vague thought of going to Spanish, if she didn't show up by one o'clock. After all, he thought, it might be nice to let the instructor know who I am. If I don't go pretty soon, he won't know I exist.

The five minute warning bell rang. Al took one last look around the crowded sidewalk and was rewarded by seeing Kit coming across the street toward the building. The signs of her crying had disappeared now. She smiled mechanically when she saw him coming.

"I'm glad I found you," he said. "I was on the verge of going to Spanish."

"Heaven forbid. This is only the fourth day of classes."

"Friday didn't count," he said. "Where have you been? I've been looking all over for you."

"The drugstore. If you're going to scold me for my bad manners, I'm sorry. I guess I was a poor sport, but you four carry a joke pretty far. At first I thought you were trying to be helpful."

"We were, in a way. Trying to cheer you up--at least I was."

"I'm not very cheerable today, I guess." She looked aimlessly down at the books in her arms, waiting to see what Al wanted with her.

"Do you have a class now?" he asked.

"Yes, but I'm not going. I wouldn't listen...I'm not like you, though," she added. "I usually don't cut."

Al grinned. "I was wondering if you wanted to come back to the car--the guys will be gone. We could listen to the ball game, and if you feel like talking--or if you don't want to, you don't have to--or I could drive along by the river..." He stopped, bogged down in the confusion of helpful suggestions.

"Okay," she said, "if you want me. I don't know anything about baseball."

"You'll learn."

On the way to the car, they stopped a moment in the drug-store to give the Scruggses and Tommy a chance to get back to school and to get Al some cigarettes. As she stood beside him, Al noticed that she was not quite as tall as he had supposed, perhaps a little shorter than Mary, even. Inevitably, the comparison with Mary was there, and almost always Kit suffered by it, he thought. Still, she did have a sort of hollow-eyed beauty distinctly her own today. He wondered if she had lost a lot of sleep recently.

While they were waiting for cigarettes Al noticed the candy counter and asked her what kind of gum she liked. She had no preference but blushed, pleased and embarrassed. He picked out three different packages and poured them into her hands, wondering what sort of person her lieutenant had been. If she blushed when Al offered gum, what would she do if he gave her flowers?

As they returned to the car, he continued to ponder about the lieutenant. He was a student now, she said. Probably he still wore his uniform, bars and all...at least would be wearing a big bright discharge button...a business school boy, or better still, an athlete. That was what they taught at Springfield...Probably this guy was another Clifton, only with muscles. Already Clifton had been irritating him, although he got on so well with the rest of the family that Al had hesitated to say or do anything. Next time, however, he would be

more careful before inviting people home.

"Where would you like to go?" he said, helping Kit into the car and going around to get in, himself.

She shook her head.

"Want to stay here?"

Again she shook her head.

"Okay. We'll just roam."

He headed the car out into traffic and eventually swung onto the parkway by the river. The ball game was not yet on, so he tuned in some music, but she seemed not to hear it, nor to be seeing anything that went by.

"You look distracted," he said after a minute. "Do you feel like talking?"

"I don't mean to put on a show for you. I'm really not so downcast. It got me for a minute this noon, but it's not really important. What I was thinking about...I was wondering why you took such a sudden interest. I'd hate to think you felt sorry for me. Everyone always feels sorry for me."

This was exactly the reason Al had offered to take her out, but he decided against admitting it. Maybe she did have some spirit in her own quiet way if she didn't relish commiseration.

"Didn't this lieutenant..."

"Please!"

"This student, then--that sounds awkward. Give him a

name."

"Jack."

"Didn't he mean very much to you, then?"

"I don't suppose so. It's more a matter of pride, I think. That's what was wrong at lunch. As you can imagine, I haven't had very many men." She blushed again as she spoke.

"That, young lady," said Al, "is something you should never admit to your closest friends, let alone to a comparative stranger like me. You use all the wrong psychology when you do that. If you seem hard to get, you'll be sought after--the law of supply and demand."

"It's a pretty obvious fact."

"Don't let it be. Make up lies. Disappear evenings and say you're out with different people."

"That's silly."

"Yeah," he said sadly. "I suppose it is...you hang on, though. I'll think of something." He was going to add "if I have to take you out myself," but caught himself in time. When she exposed herself that way, the natural reaction was to condescend. You couldn't help it. The way she was feeling now, she'd sit there and take it, too. There was no reason she should be without men, though. Physically she wasn't unattractive. Of course she was no match for Mary.

"You and Mary should have gone to different schools," he said.

1897

1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country, and the progress of the various branches of industry and commerce. It is found that the country is in a state of general prosperity, and that the various branches of industry and commerce are all progressing rapidly.

2. The second part of the report deals with the state of the various branches of industry and commerce. It is found that the various branches of industry and commerce are all progressing rapidly, and that the country is in a state of general prosperity.

3. The third part of the report deals with the state of the various branches of industry and commerce. It is found that the various branches of industry and commerce are all progressing rapidly, and that the country is in a state of general prosperity.

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9. The ninth part of the report deals with the state of the various branches of industry and commerce. It is found that the various branches of industry and commerce are all progressing rapidly, and that the country is in a state of general prosperity.

10. The tenth part of the report deals with the state of the various branches of industry and commerce. It is found that the various branches of industry and commerce are all progressing rapidly, and that the country is in a state of general prosperity.

"I know it."

Conversation had run slowly and they were nearly at the end of the parkway. Al pulled off the edge of the road, and parked in silence. The leaves had not yet started to turn, but the freshness had left them--dull olive drab--like the old men in rocking chairs on shaded verandas--waiting.

There were other signs of fall. Across the river, four men were pulling one of the small sport cruisers out of the water for the winter, guiding it up onto skids. They had some sort of power apparatus to pull it up, but the distance was just great enough that Al could not make out how it worked.

"Won't the ball game be on pretty soon?" Kit asked after a minute.

"I'm not so interested," he answered, peering out over the water. "The Sox have the pennant wrapped up, anyhow. Do you want it?"

"No."

Across the road, behind a shield of evenly spaced trees, was a railroad embankment. A train roared by, leaving a cloud of low-hanging smoke in the heavy air.

"Rain," said Kit.

"Hm?" he turned to her as though he had not heard.

"When smoke comes down, that means it's going to rain. Feel how heavy the air is." She smiled hopefully at him watching his face. He seemed to have almost forgotten her for

a moment, but she couldn't think of anything to say to call him back. Why did it always have to be this way? Every time she had an opportunity, suddenly there was nothing to talk about. Maybe she should learn about baseball, but where did one learn? She wondered what station the game would be on when he interrupted her train of thought.

"Can you make out what they're doing over there?" he said.

"Is that what you're staring at?" she said in relief. "I was beginning to think you were wishing you hadn't brought me."

He turned and put both hands on her shoulders. "Kit, honey, will you please stop saying such things. You sound as though you were trying to convince me I should dislike you."

"I was just being honest," she said.

"I know, but...Look, forget yourself for a few minutes. Relax." He turned her head toward the river. "Tell me how they've got their lines hooked up over there. Can you see that far?"

"Oh yes," she said almost sarcastically. "If there's anything I can do, I can see."

"Okay, where do they have the pulley mounted? What kind of engine is it?"

She peered carefully in an effort to comply with his demands. "The pulley seems to be on the back," she began.

"On the back of what?"

"Of the....I don't know what you call it," she said dolefully.

"Never mind that, then. What kind of an engine do they have?"

"Well...it's a...it just looks like an engine to me." She glanced back over to see if he were displeased, but he didn't seem so. He had not shaved today, she noticed. Little blond bristles caught the sunlight. How much darker his hair was...He must have been a blond baby.

"I know it's an engine," he said patiently, "but what kind? Does it have one head or two?"

"Head?" She was puzzled. "Do you mean top or front?"

"Never mind." He lay back in his seat and laughed gently. Kit felt frightfully dumb.

"I'm sorry," she said.

"Kit, if you apologize to me once more today--for anything--I shall have to take serious measures with you," he said with mock sternness. "Would you like to come home to supper with me?"

"Now?" she asked incredulously. "We just ate."

"No. At suppertime."

"Why--I'd love to." Again the thought passed through her mind that he was feeling sorry for her, but she carefully avoided mentioning it, trying to follow his advice. The invitation had come so suddenly, though. But at that, people

do ask you to supper without feeling sorry for you.

"You know," he said. "I've always dreamed of a girl who liked cars--a sort of female mechanic."

She looked at him to see if he were joking. Somehow a female mechanic did not seem a desirable thing to be. The insides of cars got dirty, and so did the people who worked on them. "I'm kindly disposed toward cars," she said. "They're nice to have around, but I'm not sure I'd want to take one apart."

"Wonderful!" he exclaimed, again clapping his hands on her shoulders. "Do you know that's the first time you've disagreed with me all afternoon?"

"But I was trying to be agreeable," she said meekly.

"You were trying too hard. Now tell me honestly--do you like it here? Do you want to stay and listen to the ball game?"

"It's very pretty."

He shook her gently. "That's not what I asked you."

"Yes, sir," she said. "I'm not interested in the ball game, sir. This is a beautiful place, but don't you think it's a little dull, sir? Is that better, sir?"

"Much better." Al uncoiled himself and started the engine. "Now just to show you how little choice you have in the matter, I shall tell you what we'll do, at least for the next hour or so. If you don't like it you can consider that

you're earning your supper." He turned the car around and drove back toward Boston.

"May I ask where we're going, sir?"

It seemed that they were going to Somerville in search of a tire for the car. There was a section of Somerville that housed a number of junk yards and other such dubious places where automobile parts and equipment were to be had more cheaply. Al's car required an odd-sized tire that was difficult to find, and usually more difficult to pay for. He seemed to be worried lest she be bored by the trip, but it was new to her and quite fascinating.

The junk yard section was a long, narrow cobblestone street almost entirely lined with board fences which bore crude lettering splashed on in various colors, proclaiming the various lines of wares to be found inside. Kit had not been aware that junk yards specialized, but here was one that sold truck parts, another that sold glass and windows, and even a small one that seemed to have nothing but hub-caps on display. In each yard was invariably a grizzled man in dirty clothes, supremely indifferent to his customers.

Al parked the car and left Kit to guard it, after she had assured him that she was a capable screamer, should such a need arise. She noticed, however, that he never stayed out of sight long, nor went very far without coming back to move the car up a few doors. She was just as glad that he did--the

men who brushed by the car appeared to be uniformly unsavory people. One tremendously gaunt, grey individual with uncut greasy black hair stared at her, and even walked back by the car for a second look. It occurred to her that she was probably the only one of her sex in the whole section, and she cleared her throat tentatively in preparation for screaming. The gaunt individual apparently satisfied himself on his third trip past the car, however, for he disappeared around the corner.

After a while Kit grew more accustomed to the surroundings and the curious glances, and curled up on the seat to read Don Juan for Friday's Romantic Poetry class. Al came back every five minutes or so, each time a little more discouraged. When he finally had tried the last junk yard, he returned with a long face to tell her that there were only two tires in the entire street to fit the car--one new one for forty-five dollars, and a recap for twenty-five. He had to have a tire, but he had only twenty-two dollars. Could she lend him three until next Tuesday when his government check would come in?

She made a show of objection, but lent it to him with the small warm feeling that she was having a share in his car. An even greater reward was seeing his beaming face as he returned lugging the dirty thing over his shoulder. One does not need to love the dog's half-chewed bone to love the dog.

"I suppose I should have called Mother and told her you were coming," he said on the way home.

"It might have been a good idea. If I were getting the meal, I wouldn't like it."

"I hope you like the family," he said. "You might not go for Mother at first."

"Don't worry," said Kit. "I can get along a lot better with the older generation than I can with my own. Your mother and I will hit it off from the start."

"You'll do better than I if you do," Al said glumly. "We never seem to see anything the same way. She's pretty religious."

"What about your father?" Kit asked.

"Dead."

"Oh...I'm sorry."

"Don't be. There's no sense being squeamish about it. Are both yours living?"

"Yes, but not together." Seeing that he had been so explicit, she felt she should go on, but her parent's relationships always embarrassed her. "What about the rest of your family?" she asked.

"There's Julie--she's okay. Then there's Clifton--I'm afraid he's what you call a big-butter-and-egg-man. He's a business school boy...been here two weeks and he's already joined three school societies and gotten himself elected as

corresponding secretary to the local Church Young Adults' group." Al spoke with such scorn of these activities that Kit decided to sympathize now and see later for herself.

"I take it," she said, "that Clifton is not your brother."

"God no. He's a guy that I sort of offered a room to. His last name is Paradise."

"Really?"

"Oh yes. He's very proud of it," he said. "The one person in the house who you'd love, though, and who will accept you without question is Bombo."

It was with this somewhat prejudiced preparation that Kit was taken into the Manthorne household.

CHAPTER 13

"Please, Albert, I've asked you not to feed Bombo at the table."

Bombo looked reproachfully at Mrs. Manthorne, fully aware that his behavior was not in accord with her wishes.

"Go out in the kitchen, Bombo," said Mrs. Manthorne pointing a finger.

Suddenly uncomprehending, the dog sat down and smiled up at his master.

"You might as well put him out, Albie," said Julie under her breath, "before an argument starts."

An impish grin lighted Al's face. He picked a bone from his plate, let Bombo get a whiff of it, then very deliberately cocked his arm and threw it over his horrified mother's head and through the kitchen door. Bombo crouched to spring, and for a terrible moment everyone, Al included, was sure that seventy-five pounds of dog was going to take a short cut over the top of the table. When the bone landed on the kitchen floor, however, Bombo changed his mind and took the long way around. There was an audible sigh of relief from everyone.

"Albert!" said Mrs. Manthorne when she had recovered her speech.

"By George!" said Clifton. "I could have sworn he was going to land right in my plate. I don't like that look he

gets in his eye when he sees food." He nervously filled his mouth with mashed potato as though the danger were still imminent.

Al glanced surreptitiously at Kit and saw her doing her best to hide her amusement by furiously buttering a piece of bread.

"Let's forget it," said the practical Julie. "You'll know better than to try that again, Albie."

Conversation after this occurrence dropped to rather a low ebb. Until now Mrs. Manthorne had done her best to make Kit feel at home by besetting her with a barrage of questions about herself, her school life, and her family, eventually coming to the conclusion that Kit was a sort of an "adopted" relative since she was Fred Mitton's sister-in-law, and Fred was Mrs. Manthorne's "adopted" son.

When it was discovered that Kit came from Springfield, Mrs. Manthorne was delighted. Aunt Alice lived in Springfield. Did Kit know her? Her husband was quite a prominent business man. This, of course, was followed by a mention that Uncle George was Catholic--in the tone that one mentions a horse thief in the family tree, provided that it is a sufficiently distant branch. Julie, who had recently become sensitive about the subject, chose to object strenuously to the topic of conversation. Julie was told not to eat so fast.

But now for the first time, the chirping of the birds

outside the window as they prepared to retire was noticeable in the conversational lull. Each person at the table concentrated on his plate and wondered if he shouldn't say something to be polite.

"If anyone wants more of anything except meat," said Mrs. Manthorne, catching Kit's eye, "there's M.I.K."

Kit looked bewildered.

"More in kitchen," Al explained hastily, wishing his mother wouldn't try quite so hard to be chummy and informal. He seldom brought a girl into the house, but when he did, Mother invariably treated her with this appalling cordiality that would have unnerved the most insensitive of girls. It was not until he saw this nervous vivacity his mother put on for company that he realized how very little she and he had to say to each other when they were alone.

"May I be excused?" Julie laid down her fork.

"What for, dear? You shouldn't finish your meal and run, especially when we have company."

"Oh goodness! Don't let me cause any unnecessary bother," Kit demurred uncomfortably.

"She knows she isn't supposed to eat and run," Mrs. Manthorne said.

"Don't treat me like a child, Mama. I wouldn't ordinarily run, but I've got to go out for a little while."

"Go where, dear?" Mrs. Manthorne looked concerned. "This

is a school night, you know. You can't be staying out until all hours."

Julie stood up and carried her dishes to the kitchen without any comment. They could hear her running water to rinse them and the clink as she stacked them in the corner of the soapstone sink.

"Oh, by the way, Albert," said Mrs. Manthorne, turning back to the table. "Could you run me over to Watertown on your way to school tomorrow morning? I have a new patient over there, and I want to be sure to be on time."

"That's not exactly on my way to school. What time do you have to be there?"

"Eight-thirty."

"But Mother, my class isn't till ten. That would mean getting up almost two hours early."

"Oh, never mind," said Mrs. Manthorne resignedly. "You know it means I have to get up at six-thirty if you don't take me, though, and my day over there is very long."

"Perhaps I could offer my services," said Clifton obligingly. "I have to be up early, and if Al doesn't mind my using his car, I'd be glad to run you over, Mother M."

Al glared at his roommate, then glanced at Kit whose face made it perfectly plain that she wished to remain neutral. He hated to have her see him in a bad light and felt that he was being misrepresented on several counts. There was a

streetcar line which would take his mother to Watertown almost as quickly as Al could do it. The streetcar cost ten cents, and although Mrs. Manthorne would have been willing to give Al the dime, the Cadillac would use about twice that amount of gas on a round trip.

Clifton's offer had further complicated the situation. Since Al was his roommate and his Pal, he saw no reason why the car should not be shared between them. He had borrowed it Sunday night for the Young Adults' meeting and had run the battery flat. His 'if Al doesn't mind' was a snide reference to the fact that Al had gotten angry about it.

"Oh hell," Al sighed, "I'll take you Mother. What time do you want to leave?"

"About eight," she said cheering up at once. "I should be able to get breakfast and your lunches and be ready by then. I hate to get you up early, but your day isn't as long as mine, dear."

"I don't need a lunch tomorrow, Mother M.," said Clifton helpfully, "and I don't think Julie does, either."

"Julie," called Mrs. Manthorne to the kitchen. "Lunch tomorrow?"

There was no answer.

"Julie!" called Clifton and Mrs. Manthorne in chorus. Still no response.

"Did she go out?" Mrs. Manthorne bit her lower lip.

"Apparently," said Al drily.

"I'll go look," said Clifton. "Maybe she's in the back yard."

"Save your strength, Chum," Al told him. "If she decided to go, she's gone."

"But I wanted her to get to bed early tonight," said Mrs. Manthorne worriedly. "Now she won't be in until all hours." Then, as an even more disturbing thought occurred, "And she didn't even tell me where she was going..."

The telephone started ringing in the hall, and Kit, whose chair was almost in the doorway, stood up to make room for whoever wanted to answer it.

"Go ahead," said Al. "Take it. You're just a guest now, but when you answer our phone you become a family member."

She shook her head almost fearfully, and motioned for him to pass. The continued demands of the telephone terminated any further discussion. He jumped up and squeezed by her into the hallway telling her she's missed the chance of a lifetime. It was quite true. Mary was on the line.

"Al, honey," she said. "I was so afraid someone else would answer."

"Someone almost did," he said, doing his best to make his voice casual. "What's on your mind?"

"Oh Al," she wailed. "Don't sound like that. I'm in trouble and I need you so badly."

"I didn't mean to, only..." he glanced nervously toward the dining-room, conscious that everyone was listening to him. His hand against the receiver was uncomfortably damp. "How are you?" he said lamely.

"Fred's gone," she said. "When can you come over?"

"Gone?" There was genuine alarm in Al's voice. "Where?"

"To Hartford. He'll be teaching there in January, and he had to go down to see someone or something. It doesn't matter. When can you be here?"

"You had me worried for a minute," Al said, relieved. He could hear his mother now, telling Kit how hard it was when one's son refused to accept the Church. It was not exactly to his liking, but at least he could speak more freely for a minute. "I can't get over for an hour or two," he said in a low tone, "and I can't talk now...curious people...I'm sorry, but you know I'll do the best I can. We've got company for dinner."

"Oh," she said, a little mollified. "I hate to bother you, but I'm all upset and you're the only one I can trust--so hurry, darling."

"I will."

When he came back to sit down, it was to listen to an indirect lecture from his mother, made more effective by its public airing.

"He regards it as a favor to me when he does go," she

was saying, "and I suppose I shouldn't push him, but before very long he will have left home and what help I can give him will be over and done with. I'm so glad you're a Church girl, though. So many young people these days are slipping away; I hate to see Albert among them. When he was a little boy, his father and I tried our best to show him the value of the Church and how much prayer can mean. I remember when he was in fourth grade, he got a gold star in Sunday School for not missing a Sunday all year."

"Mother!"

"Well you did. You were proud enough of it then." She turned back to Kit. "I still have it tucked away upstairs, somewhere. Since his father has gone, though, nothing I can say seems to do much good...although he has promised me never to drink. You would think that his battle experience would have shown him how much need there is for prayer, but it didn't seem to." She turned back to Al. "Prayer is like electricity or money in the bank. You may not be able to see it, but if you never turn on the switch or try to draw on your account, you'll never benefit from it. I've told you these things before, Albert."

"You certainly have, Mother," said Al as kindly as he could. "I don't know what prompted you to repeat them to Kit. After all, she's not responsible for my religious conduct...I think we'd better be leaving, now," he added standing up.

"Can't I help with the dishes?" asked Kit, nobly trying to be the polite guest.

"No. I'll do 'em when I come back." Al took her arm and all but dragged her into the hallway.

"Thank you very much for supper," she called over her shoulder.

"Yeah, thanks," Al added. He could see Clifton gathering up dishes, shaking his head sanctimoniously.

It was dusk when they went out the door. The clear air had the tang of early evening in it--the tang of late September when the sweetish smell of burning leaves becomes a part of the atmosphere, and you see men in their shirt sleeves standing over their bonfires with rakes, poking their bonfires so the orange embers fly up and disappear into the dusk, and the grey-blue smoke billows up like fog by the street lamps and is absorbed into the clean air.

"Football weather," said Al.

The leather seats were cool now and the little lights on the dash board and the running lights on the front fenders made the Cadillac seem big and square, like a powerful tugboat weaving in and out of harbor traffic in the evening. The tar-like odor of gasoline and grease faint in the dry air...the even purring throb of the restless engine. He wished Kit would rest her head against his shoulder--fine, soft strands of hair blown against his face--but she stayed on her own side

enjoying it alone.

"How did you like supper?"

"Your mother cooks very well." She came out of her dream and sat up attentively.

"That isn't what I meant--dopey."

"Where are we going, Al?"

"Don't change the subject." He was driving her toward the dormitory but by a circuitous route. She would wonder why he was leaving her so soon, but maybe she wouldn't ask if he took a little longer to get there. He didn't want to have to lie to her--not yet.

"Al," she said seriously. "I enjoyed dinner because you were there and because you were thoughtful enough to ask me when you thought I was lonely. I loved sitting in the car by those spooky junk yards with all the strange men while you worried about your old tire. I even enjoyed lending you the three dollars...Why can't we leave it at that? You want my criticism of your family, but if I gave it you'd be defending them despite yourself. After all, they're yours and I'm an outsider."

Al had not been sure what he had wanted her to say, but this seemed to be the right answer, and it surprized him. It didn't fit with his preconception of Kit porterfield. Again, he could not have said what his conception of her had been, but her tact and wisdom were a pleasant bonus--like finding a

cigarette in what you thought had been an empty pack.

"If you see more of me, you'll see more of them," he said.

"I will say this," she added. "If I do 'see more of you' I won't make you go to Sunday School."

"I'm sorry about that. I couldn't seem to stop her. There's a great deal back of it that you couldn't understand."

"Maybe I can," she said mostly to herself.

Perhaps she could at that, he thought. Perhaps it wasn't such an insoluble problem, but when you're involved in those things, you can't grasp them yourself. Like the kitten in the ball of twine--too close to its own entanglement.

Al snapped on the radio, and conversation died until they drew up and parked across the street from the dormitory.

"Can you come in for a while?" Kit asked. "We haven't much to offer except ourselves. There are plenty of lonely women in there." She glanced coyly at him. "That should be right down your alley."

Almost an hour had passed since Mary's call. It would take another twenty minutes to get back to her apartment.

"No I can't," he said apologetically. "I'd like to, but--"

"Oho, you don't need my selection of lonely hearts. You have a harem of your own. It's a shame, too. We have a wide selection--skinny ones, fat ones, bearded ones, hairless ones.

Do you know that C. C. B. has the world's crummiest selection of women? No other college can make that statement."

"If it's that phone call that's worrying you..." Al stopped again. His face was flushed and he was afraid she would see it in the light from the dormitory windows. "It wasn't anyone but Nicky Luce." As he said the words he looked down, pretending to be searching for something under his feet, but it was an awkward maneuver and he felt foolish doing it.

"I was just kidding you." Her serious tone was a help. "Don't think of it because I really do have some studying to do."

She started to climb out by herself, but Al insisted she wait and let him come around for her and escort her to the dormitory door where, instead of lingering, she slipped in with hardly another word beyond 'good-night'. It saved awkwardness, yet he stood there for a moment wishing she had stayed at least to give him a chance to mention tomorrow. But then, he'd had his chance.

This was twice, he reflected as he drove slowly back toward Cambridge, that he had left her abruptly after she had given him an opening. Another opening might not come...that would probably be better...shouldn't mix sisters...tricky business.

He liked Kit, though. She was good to have around...surprisingly easy to talk to after you got over the first

hurdle. With Mary it was different. She would never be easy to talk to, but things had rather gone beyond the conversational stage by now. You liked Kit, but you wanted Mary...that was the difference. Funny how they seemed less and less like sisters, the better you got to know them. They even seemed to look less alike. Maybe they weren't really sisters. He wished it were true.

The thought of his awkward lying brought back the uncomfortable heat to his face. Usually lying came easily to him because the usual, run-of-the-mill lie didn't count much-- "No, Mother, I haven't been drinking...I'm sorry I missed your class, sir, but I had an appointment..." but tonight's lie was different. It was what she had wanted him to say, wasn't it? The truth was certainly out of the question, if for no other reason than Mary's protection. Maybe tonight he and Mary wouldn't do anything. He would breeze in and hear her troubles and breeze out again as soon as he decently could. Maybe he could even drop over to Nicky's afterward to take the curse away from what he had told Kit. Maybe after tonight he and Mary could let things slide. Maybe a lot of things. Maybe he even might go to class in the morning. You could never tell.

Nevertheless, he parked the car two blocks away from Mary's place and walked the rest of the way. Nasty minded people are liable to question the best intended visits to women whose husbands are away.

When he reached the door he noticed that, as last time, it was slightly ajar, but when he went in there were lights burning. The shades were drawn, the windows down, and it was hot and stuffy in contrast to the cool evening air outdoors. For the first time he noticed that there was brown cardboard wainscoting around the lower half of the apartment walls, and he was sure that the stuffy heat was what had made him notice it. For a moment he stood there; stuffy heat and brown cardboard wainscoting went round and round confusedly in his mind.

"Is that you, Al?" called Mary from the bedroom.

"Yes," he said keeping his voice low. "Why are all the windows closed? It's hot as hell in here."

"I wanted to take a bath and it was getting chilly," she said coming out to meet him. She had not bothered to put much on after her bath, he noticed. Shorts and a halter that left her dark shoulders bare. Bare shoulders were her specialty; they accentuated the firm, delicate cords in her neck and her high, full breasts.

Without a word Al snapped off the lights and opened the windows, then followed Mary to the bedroom, and it was not until later that thoughts of Kit and his half-made resolutions returned to him.

"This has accomplished nothing toward solving your problems," Al said. "In fact you haven't even brought up the

subject." He adjusted the pillow comfortably under his head.

"I really believe you were just luring me into your snare."

There was no answer.

"Am I being flip?" he asked.

"A little."

"Then you do have troubles?"

"I'm not happy, Al." Her voice was calm, yet in the darkness there was something disquieting about it.

"About us?"

"Quite the contrary," she said. "What we do doesn't seem to upset my conscience at all. What bothers me is that our...activities..." she broke off and for a minute it occurred to him that she might be crying, but presently she resumed in a dry-eyed tone: "The fact that we do what we do, and that it doesn't bother me," she said slowly, "should indicate something to you about the state of affairs between Fred and me."

It was one of those things that never could have been said in daylight. Al took in her meaning, but without fully comprehending it. Perhaps he didn't want to comprehend.

"You mean you fight with Fred?" He knew as he spoke that he was being obtuse.

"Al," said Mary patiently, "you've known Fred most of your life. Have you ever fought with him?"

"But I'm not married to him," Al protested, "and I'm not you."

"You're just as hot-headed," she said, "but that's not the point...you know, if I could have just one knock-down, drag-out fight with that man...if I could just get any emotion out of him! He's bovine, Al, just like an ox...I think the fact that you're so completely his opposite is what struck me. You do everything at two hundred degrees. Fred operates at fifty."

The more she said, the more uncomfortable Al became. It is one thing to be admired and flattered, but this was beyond flattery or even admiration. The idea of filling in where Fred was lacking was not a pleasant one; the idea of displacing him altogether was frightening.

"When you started to fool around," she continued, "I let you for exactly that reason. Life here was so sterile, so static that I couldn't stand it any more. I wanted to play with you the way one wants to gamble, I suppose...just one fling, then back to normalcy."

Al grasped at the straw. "Of course. That's the way it was with me, too!"

Mary heard his tone and understood it. "What are you scared of?" she asked contemptuously. "What have you got to lose?" She reached out in the darkness and patted him on the head. As she continued, her tone was gentle, but behind it was that familiar undercurrent of sarcasm. "I'm the one who stands to lose. When I married him, I promised myself I'd

The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the car was the cold, crisp air. It was a relief after the warm, humid weather of the city. I walked towards the old stone building, its walls covered in ivy. The door was slightly ajar, and I pushed it open. Inside, the room was dimly lit, with a single lamp casting a warm glow. I found a note pinned to the wall, written in a cursive hand. It was a letter from a friend, mentioning a secret garden hidden in the back of the property. I followed the path through the trees, my heart racing with anticipation. The garden was beautiful, with flowers in full bloom and a small stream flowing through it. I sat on a bench, watching the water flow, feeling a sense of peace I had never experienced before. The sun was setting, and the sky was painted in shades of orange and pink. I stayed in the garden until the stars came out, feeling like I had discovered a hidden world. The letter mentioned a secret garden, and I had found it. It was exactly what I needed. I had been looking for a place to escape, a place where I could be alone and think. This was it. I had found it. I had found my secret garden.

never go near another man. He knew I had before--I told him, and he took it just as calmly as he takes everything else. He even went so far as to suggest I might have suffered. I've often wondered if he meant it. You never know what's in his mind...

"It's a funny thing, but do you know that he never asked me to promise not to do it again? I can't even tell whether he cares or not. He never mentions it or throws it in my face...sometimes I almost wish he would."

"You make him sound bloodless," said Al with a shudder. "Everybody has feelings. Doesn't he tell you he loves you?"

Mary sighed disgustedly. "Talking to you is like talking to a board. You just have no comprehension of what I mean... I'll try to tell you, but until you've lived with it, you can't conceive it."

"Yes, Al, he does say, 'I love you, Mary'. He makes a point of doing it every day. I believe he read it in a book somewhere--'A woman likes to be told you're in love with her, even when she's your wife'. He does everything he knows how to make me happy. He gives me security, he takes me out, he's not a bad lover, he works hard for us. That's what I married him for. I knew exactly what I was getting in for...but I don't know how long I can stand it. Maybe the choice won't be mine to make, now."

"Doggone it, Mary, don't talk like that," said Al

The first of these is the fact that the world is not a uniform whole, but a collection of many different parts, each of which has its own characteristics and its own history. This is the case with the human world, as well as with the natural world. The second is the fact that the world is not a static whole, but a dynamic whole, which is constantly changing and developing. This is the case with the human world, as well as with the natural world. The third is the fact that the world is not a simple whole, but a complex whole, which is made up of many different parts, each of which is interconnected with the others. This is the case with the human world, as well as with the natural world. The fourth is the fact that the world is not a single whole, but a collection of many different wholes, each of which is a part of the larger whole. This is the case with the human world, as well as with the natural world. The fifth is the fact that the world is not a single whole, but a collection of many different wholes, each of which is a part of the larger whole. This is the case with the human world, as well as with the natural world. The sixth is the fact that the world is not a single whole, but a collection of many different wholes, each of which is a part of the larger whole. This is the case with the human world, as well as with the natural world. The seventh is the fact that the world is not a single whole, but a collection of many different wholes, each of which is a part of the larger whole. This is the case with the human world, as well as with the natural world. The eighth is the fact that the world is not a single whole, but a collection of many different wholes, each of which is a part of the larger whole. This is the case with the human world, as well as with the natural world. The ninth is the fact that the world is not a single whole, but a collection of many different wholes, each of which is a part of the larger whole. This is the case with the human world, as well as with the natural world. The tenth is the fact that the world is not a single whole, but a collection of many different wholes, each of which is a part of the larger whole. This is the case with the human world, as well as with the natural world.

nervously. "We both went into this with eyes open--let's not make it a bigger issue than it is. No one needs to know. My God, I don't want to be a homewrecker."

He had hardly got the last word out when she sat up and slapped him very hard and very squarely on the side of his face. He could feel each finger mark stinging in the darkness, but his pride would not let him reach up to rub it.

"You cringing, stinking coward," she said deliberately, getting the most out of each word. "I thought you had a spark of generosity but all you're thinking of is yourself."

For a minute he almost believed it. It was true that he was afraid, but it was not only for himself. The natural reaction to finding your toy music box is a time bomb--fear... get rid of it...dump it in water before it goes off. After all, it was her home he had been speaking of. If she wanted to blame him alone it was all right, but he wasn't going to stay and be slapped around into the bargain.

"If that's the way you feel," he said slowly, "I think I'd better go."

He started up but she grabbed his arm and held him. "No, don't," she said quickly. "I'm sorry I slapped you. I didn't mean what I said. I said you were afraid because I was scared myself. I just don't know where I am or what to do." And she began to weep hysterically. "I don't want to lose him," she said. "I don't want to lose him." Over and over for nearly

twenty minutes that was her only phrase. Al did his best to comfort her to no avail. When she did subside it was of her own accord and quite suddenly, the way a baby stops crying when you feed it.

"I don't think I'd better come back any more," he said finally. "What I was trying to say was that if we just forget anything **ever** happened, time may take care of the rest."

"Anyway, I've learned something," she said. "It isn't worth it...but I've said that before too. Too many times... Go home, Al, I'm **sleepy**."

"Isn't there anything I can do?" he asked.

"Yes." She rolled over onto her stomach.

"What is it?"

"Go home."

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CHAPTER 14

It was along toward the middle of October that Al began playing solitaire again. In the army he had played a lot, especially during the dull days toward the end of the war in Europe, but since his discharge had lost interest. There had been too many other things to do, what with school, the summer job, the car and Bombo, not to mention Mary. His love of cards was satisfied by the hours of the more gregarious bridge in the college lounge.

By the third week in October, however, he had fallen seriously behind in his schoolwork, and had promised himself in Kit's presence that he would play no more bridge until the end of the summer. That night, in an effort to give purpose to his promise, he had closed himself into his room with his books--and a deck of cards for diversion. He laid out a solitaire hand to get himself settled down to study. The hand played very poorly. Without thinking, he laid out another which turned out even worse. All but one of the aces were hopelessly buried. Nettled, he played a third and a fourth hand still without success, then switched to an easier game in hopes of winning at least one before getting to work. So it went until eleven o'clock. After winning a game he tried for two out of three, three out of five, five out of seven, then switched back to Canfield, telling himself as he played each

hand that this was to be absolutely the last. When the grandfather's clock from the stair landing below struck eleven, he dutifully left a game unfinished, put the cards away and picked up his history book with firm determination. At twenty minutes past eleven he was asleep with the open book on his chest.

After that, playing solitaire became a nightly ritual with him. He began keeping an elaborate statistical score sheet tabulating all the game results with the half-formed idea of selling them to an encyclopedia or a gambling house. He found his luck ran in cycles of approximately forty games, and even considered trying his luck at gambling on this basis, but in the end decided it would be more profitable to run his own tables--if only he had the money to set up business.

He became so interested in his scoring that he took the deck to school with him and played in odd minutes between classes, steadfastly refusing to join in any bridge games until his amused friends began calling him "Ace." Kit said nothing about it until he began cutting classes again. She and Al were intimate enough by this time that she knew when his classes were, but not intimate enough so that she felt she could prod him far without fear of being told to mind her own business. He was so far behind in astronomy, however, that she took the chance.

"Al, you were going to your class--remember?"

"Too late now."

She sighed. "It's your worry, I suppose, but in almost three weeks of classes, you've been to this one exactly five times."

"Three o'clock classes drag me," he said. "I don't know why I ever signed up for it." It was getting far enough along into the semester that his uneasiness about the accumulated work made him tend to resent any mention of it. He had not been to the class five times; he had been twice. Astronomy. He didn't know a damn thing about it. Next week would bring the first quiz, too. Twelve minutes past three. The instructor always began promptly at five past and took pains to pause and frown at late-comers since the only door to the classroom was at the front, making each tardy entrance a distraction. It would be especially embarrassing since he was such a stranger in the class. The hell with it. He laid out another hand.

And so it went. The more he procrastinated, the easier it was to play solitaire. Schoolwork was not the only thing that was bothering him--there was still Mary. He had carried out his determination not to see her again, but still she was always in the back of his mind. The very fact that he was seeing her sister every day was wrong. If he continued to go with Kit, the truth was bound to come out sooner or later. Kit was too good a girl to be hurt by something that wasn't her fault.

Already she had come uncomfortably close to finding out the truth. For leaving his car on the street after midnight the last time he had been with Mary, Al received a summons from the Cambridge Police. The notice came in the mail and he unthinkingly opened it in Kit's presence. Fortunately she saw only the envelope, but even at that it took some elaborate lying to get out of it. As before, he did a clumsy, embarrassing job.

That was last Friday. Next Saturday they would go to the football game and to the party afterward, but that would have to be their last time out together...Maybe he was giving up a good thing in Kit. Probably she wouldn't understand, but what the hell is a man going to do? Maybe he should just tell her now and have it done with--"Kit, I've had an affair with your married sister, so naturally you won't want to be seeing me any more." No, that certainly wouldn't do. There was still Mary's happiness to be considered.

There were other troubles. Clifton became increasingly difficult to live with. From the very first there had been the problem of his unwavering neatness opposed to Al's carefree sloppy manner of housekeeping. Before Clifton's coming, the inconvenience of living on the third floor had been offset by the fact that Al could live as he pleased. Now he was startled every morning at seven by his roommate's alarm clock. He could not keep the dog in the room at night because Clifton objected

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to being wakened by a cold nose. He could not listen to his radio during the evenings when Clifton was trying to study.

Beyond the ordinary difficulties and annoyances of living in close quarters, there was the constant personality clash between the two of them. Clifton was a born efficiency expert, a leader, and while Al himself was not a leader he objected to being led by anyone whom he considered inferior to himself. Clifton was a business school boy to the core and held a thinly concealed scorn for liberal arts schools. He could see no value in "impractical" courses and regarded "culture" as an affectation. The fact that Al's studying consisted of playing statistical solitaire gave him much food for comment.

Far more annoying than Clifton, the roommate, or Clifton, the efficiency expert, was Clifton, the beloved. He had met a little blond nursing student named Ruthie at the Young People's Meeting one Sunday night, and had fallen hopelessly for her flirtations. For weeks Al went to sleep lulled by a lusty panegyric on Ruthie.

"Good night, Clifton."

"By George, Al, you're turning in early."

"My constitution demands constant, regular hours of satisfying sleep. Good night."

"You're lucky." Clifton snapped off the light by his head, rolled over on his back to gaze up at the moon whose light filled the room with a smoky-blue haze. "You can sleep."

"Moonstruck?" Al asked, being the good straight-man.

"You haven't any idea, pal. Great Scott...so lovely..."

His voice trailed off into something resembling strangulation.

"Ruthie?"

"I can't get over it. Why any girl, how such a glorious hunk of lass could go for me."

"She'll get over it."

"You can laugh, you can laugh. When you are lucky enough--if you are lucky enough--to be blessed with a love like ours...God that lass loves me...can't get over it. It's such awful torture to adore somebody like that, to want her so, and yet love her too much to touch her. We were out in that little arbor below the hospital night before last...no one around. It would have been easy...too easy. She wanted me to, I think. I've never met such a passionate girl. She gets so worked up she can't even see, but I can't touch her. What can you do with a girl who trusts you that way..."

"Put the boots to her." Al turned his back on Clifton and the moon.

"I can't, Al. I literally ache for her, but I can't do it. If she were some old whore...but she's so beautiful. You've seen her--that gold silk hair, that build..." Clifton rolled over and groaned again. "She showed me some snapshots of herself in a bathing suit that would absolutely lay you out. And her skin--as soft as the look in a doe's eye."

None of Al's troubles--the inability to stay at his schoolwork, the aftermath of the affair with Mary, the constant rub with Clifton--were anything you could really call troubles. They were too vague; no really knotty problem was at hand to be attacked directly, but always there was the vague unsatisfied feeling that you weren't going anywhere. So you played statistical solitaire and kept a statistical score sheet.

The one bright leaf on the dull autumn landscape was Julie who had become glowingly and irresponsibly in love with Joe Mulligan. If Joe did little more than tolerate her when she amused him, she didn't see it, but fell daily more in love with him. When Clifton maundered on about Ruthie it sickened Al slightly, but Julie's ebullient chatter about Joe rather pleased him. She didn't talk much in front of Mother but would come up to the boys' room because Al liked to talk to her and because she could always get a rise out of Clifton.

"Did you hear about Joe?" she asked, bursting in on them one afternoon. "They offered him the editorship of the University Lit. magazine--the first time a sophomore has had such an opportunity--but He doesn't think He'll take it." The subtle pride in her voice capitalized the "He's" when they referred to Joe.

"Oh?" said Al.

"He says it isn't worth the bother. The school cripples

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research. It also mentions the scope of the study and the limitations. The second part of the paper discusses the methodology used in the study. It mentions the data sources and the statistical methods used. The third part of the paper discusses the results of the study. It mentions the findings and the conclusions. The fourth part of the paper discusses the implications of the study. It mentions the policy implications and the future research.

The study found that there is a significant positive relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The results also show that the control variables have a significant effect on the dependent variable. The study concludes that the findings are consistent with the previous research. The study also suggests that further research is needed to explore the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable in more detail.

The study has several limitations. First, the sample size is relatively small, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Second, the study is a cross-sectional study, which cannot establish causality. Third, the study only focuses on the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable, and does not explore other factors that may affect the dependent variable.

In conclusion, the study provides valuable insights into the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The findings suggest that there is a significant positive relationship between the two variables. The study also suggests that further research is needed to explore the relationship in more detail.

it by giving it so little financial backing. He was pleased at the offer, though."

"I should think he might be," said Clifton indignantly. "It's an offer I'd like to have."

Al leered. "I thought you were the boy who didn't go in for culture," he said sarcastically.

"He's started a novel but he won't let me see it," Julie went on, one eye on the discomfited Clifton. "He says he should have started it five years ago so he'll have to do twice as much now. That's the main reason he isn't taking the editor's job."

"You've got it real bad, haven't you?" Al smirked.

Julie grinned back at him. "He's a hard man to live with, though. You can never tell how he's going to be. One minute he boots you out the door and the next he's bringing you flowers. He's in town pacing the Esplanade now. Told me he couldn't stand the sight of me--but I'm meeting him at the room in half an hour."

"His room?" Clifton raised an eyebrow.

"Foul minded man!" Julie grinned again and glanced at her watch. "He's taking me out to supper to celebrate his birthday. I think he borrowed the money, too."

"Your brother, here, also borrows money," said Clifton glancing at the mirror in which was stuck a large sign--"Al owes Clifton \$3.50."

"You'll get it back, Shylock." Al glowered at him briefly.

"Professor Wilson doesn't know what to do with him," said Julie bringing the subject back home. "The rules say he has to take Sophomore Comp. to major in English, especially if he's doing creative writing, but he's so far beyond the rest of the kids that he's wasting his time."

"Yes, it does seem a shame," said Al with a trace of weariness in his voice. Even he was beginning to wilt under the high pressure salesmanship.

"You two are just jealous," said Julie cheerfully, jumping to her feet. "I'd better head out, just to make sure I get there ahead of him. He's never on time himself, but he won't stand for my being late...Terrible man," she said over her shoulder, starting away. As she reached the door she paused. "Al, dear, try to calm mother down if I don't get in until after one."

Then later that night, or rather, early the next morning came another dreary scene with Mother. Al was sound asleep when Mrs. Manthorne wakened him quietly and motioned for him to follow her downstairs.

"Where's your sister?" she said as he came down to sit sleepily on her bed.

"I don't know, Mom. Out with Joe, I suppose. Isn't she in yet?"

"Of course not," snapped Mrs. Manthorne. She was really angry. "I've been up half the night worrying about that child. I let her stay at home to go to school in hopes that we could have a family again, but times like this I wish I'd sent her away where she'd be safe and I could get some peace of mind." Mrs. Manthorne pulled the frayed collar of her late husband's bathrobe more tightly around her neck and went to peer out the front window. "She didn't even tell me she was going out. Did you know?"

"Yes dear, but I thought she must have let you know or she wouldn't be out on a week night," said Al uneasily, aware of the specious reasoning. Mrs. Manthorne, however, was too distraught to catch it.

"Did she tell you when she planned to be home?"

"Not after one, I think she said. What time is it now?"

"Two thirty."

"What!" Al was genuinely startled. Two-thirty was late even for a week-end date. He had trusted Julie to use her discretion with Joe, but this sort of thing could not continue. "Even at that, Mom," he said, trying to sound convincing, "she's probably all right. If anything had happened, they would always let you know right away."

"Not if she were mangled beyond recognition." Mrs. Manthorne turned despairingly from the window, her face contorted in an effort at self-control. She came back to the bed, picked

up the telephone directory, and thumbed through it aimlessly. After a minute she dumped it on the floor and returned to her vigil at the window. When she spoke again, there was a quaver in her tone. "It isn't so much that I worry about accidents, Albert...What would she do to stay out until this time in the morning? Everything must have closed up hours ago."

"Talk, mostly. Joe's a great talker. When he gets a bunch of his friends around they forget all about the time."

If his mother even heard him, she took little stock in his words. "You don't realize what a difficult period she's going through right now," she said. "You won't understand until you have children of your own, but the first years of 'growing up'..." she hesitated over the phrase--"especially now that she's started running around with boys, are very critical years. Her whole future happiness may depend on a wise decision at this time." She came back and sat down beside him, her hand on his arm, looking deeply, imploringly into his eyes. "I do my best to guide her without restraining her, but it's difficult for a mother to do alone. You must try to help me, Albert--try to take your father's place in that respect."

"Yes, Mother." Al absently untangled the fringe on his bathrobe tassel. It seemed almost inconceivable that she intended her words to be taken at face value. Could she really believe that not only her daughter but her son were still

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The study was conducted using a qualitative research approach. The data was collected through interviews with participants who were selected based on their experience with the phenomenon being studied. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format, allowing the researcher to explore the participants' experiences in depth while also ensuring that the key areas of interest were covered. The data was then analyzed using thematic analysis, which involves identifying themes or patterns in the data that relate to the research objectives.

The findings of the study suggest that there are several key factors that influence the phenomenon being studied. These factors include the participants' personal experiences, the social context in which they are operating, and the specific circumstances of the situation. The study also found that there are some common themes or patterns in the data that relate to the research objectives. These themes include the importance of communication, the role of the individual, and the impact of the environment.

The implications of the findings suggest that there are some practical applications of the research. For example, the findings could be used to develop interventions or programs that aim to address the issues identified in the study. The study also highlights the need for further research in this area, as there are still many questions that need to be answered.

In conclusion, the study provides a valuable contribution to the understanding of the phenomenon being studied. It highlights the importance of communication, the role of the individual, and the impact of the environment. The findings also suggest that there are some practical applications of the research, which could be used to develop interventions or programs that aim to address the issues identified in the study.

lily-white? How could you talk to her, even begin to make her understand when she was so far from the truth and actuality? If he were going to take Father's place he would do it in his own way, by keeping in touch with Julie's activities but not by filling her with advice she would neither want nor accept. When she needed help, she'd come for it.

There was the click of the front door softly being closed downstairs.

"She's here," he said jumping up. "I'll go down and talk to her. You get into bed. If you two are going to fight, save it until morning when you can both be a little more rational."

He left the room without waiting for an answer and went down the stairs hoping for a word with Julie before his mother started the inevitable lecture. Julie had snapped on the small telephone table lamp, casting just enough light in the big hallway to give it its customary tomb-like atmosphere. When she emerged from the coat closet, her face was a greenish-white in the half light. She looked very young and defenseless and small, yet there was a defiant fire in her dark eyes.

"Where have you been, honey?" he said softly. "It's getting on to three o'clock. Mother's been going crazy up there."

"I know it," The defiant tension left her face momentarily. "I was planning to be here before one, but I got

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the
theoretical framework in the study of the
relationship between the variables. The second part
describes the methodology used in the study, including
the data sources and the statistical techniques employed.
The third part presents the results of the study, showing
the significant findings and the implications for the
theory and practice. The final part concludes the paper
by summarizing the main points and suggesting areas for
future research.

The results of the study indicate that there is a strong
positive relationship between the variables, which is
consistent with the theoretical expectations. The findings
also suggest that the theoretical framework is a useful
tool for understanding the relationship between the
variables. The implications of the study are that the
theoretical framework should be used in the study of
the relationship between the variables. The study also
suggests that the methodology used in the study is
appropriate for the study of the relationship between
the variables. The study concludes by suggesting that
future research should focus on the study of the
relationship between the variables.

myself high and didn't dare come in. I was awful sick, Albie."

"You look terrible. What are you going to tell Mother?"

"I don't know. Did you say anything about Joe?" She glanced apprehensively up the shadowy staircase toward the second floor.

"I only said you were together...Look..." he lowered his voice... "Tell her you all got talking, then when they drove the gang home, they brought you in last. Make a point of mentioning Joe's birthday."

"That was just a gag. Besides, Joe and I were alone and nobody drove us here. We walked up from the subway."

"She doesn't know that. Now go on quickly before she gets any madder...get into bed and face the wall. You smell like an old, old apple."

He trailed her up the stairs to make sure she followed directions, and as she went into her room, he stopped to put his head in at his mother's doorway. Mother was in bed, belligerently concentrating on a wispily illustrated love story in the Journal, gnawing on her lower lip as she read.

"She's okay," Al said softly. "They all got talking late as I thought. She's pretty tired so why don't you let her get some sleep before you discipline her on anything."

"If she's that tired," said Mrs. Manthorne grimly, in a tone loud enough to be heard in the other bedroom, "she'd

better sleep tomorrow instead of going to school. I'm certain I won't be able to work, and all I've been doing is sitting here waiting."

Al held his breath to see if Julie would take the bait, but no sound beyond the faint rustle of clothing and the small clink of swinging coathangers came from her room.

"Go to sleep, Mother," he said. "We'll all feel better in the morning." He reached toward the light switch and, when she made no show of objection, turned it off, then went gingerly up to the third floor. Maybe the two of them, kept separated, would maintain peace at least until he could get back to sleep.

As he reached the top of the stairs, however, he heard the creak of his mother's bedspring and a moment later, the sound of her padding barefoot into Julie's room. For a moment or two they kept their voices low, but by the time Al had climbed back into his own bed, phrases from below were becoming more and more audible. In her anger Mother had chosen to point out to Julie how much sleep she needed and how little her children allowed her to get--the worst possible approach. Al went to the door and closed it gently. No use having Clifton awakened and in on the row.

Even then the sound of their quarrelling continued intermittently for the next half hour, punctuated by the occasional slamming of a door. If only Mother doesn't find out Julie was

drinking, Al reflected as he lay in the darkness. Her coming in late will blow over in a few days, but not her drinking... nearly 3:45...I'll miss my psych in the morning...Kit won't like that...what the hell, after Saturday there'll be no more Kit...Funny that Mary hasn't called or anything, but how could she?...Even Fred seemed distant yesterday. Does he know?...

Why don't they shut up down there?...Poor Mother just won't see what's going on right under her nose, and there would be no use trying to tell her. She'd just get hysterical and make us promise never to do it again...Maybe I should go down...but Cliff would be sure to wake up.

Taxonomy quiz...The physiology of the nerve system... ganglions...dorsal routes, ventral routes..which is which...

Here we go round the dorsal route,

The ventral route, the dorsal route...

Oh hell.

When it's gangly on the Rockies

Then the dorse'll come to you...

For the third time the slamming of a door below brought him back to wakefulness with a start. Then it was quiet, but the very fact of the electric tension below tensed his stomach. He could not go back to sleep. When would they start again?

Finally, with a sigh, he snapped on the light beside his bed, carefully tipping the shade to keep the light from

...

Clifton's face. On the windowsill was a deck of cards which he shuffled carefully and slowly before laying out the hand.

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CHAPTER 15

Julie sat in the wicker chair in the corner by the fireplace talking to the Norwegian student. He had been going to Harvard this year and was very proud of his English. She couldn't see what possible connection he had with anyone else at the party, but there seemed always to be one such person at such parties--for color she supposed. "Terribly interesting person...he was in the Norwegian underground during the war, you know. Learned English from an American flyer whom his family hid and nursed back to health."

Julie had finally given up trying to keep track of Joe. He kept wandering around from group to group being intellectual...and he wouldn't dance. She could see part of his back from where she was sitting. Talking to Al--no, Al and Kit had gone, hadn't they. She distinctly remembered Al's saying something about getting in earlier because Mother wasn't feeling too well.

"They say I learned English from the aviator, but I didn't," the Norwegian boy was saying. He was immaculately thin, dressed in a grey flannel business suit, and he wore very round, thick tortoise-shell glasses. "In Norway we study languages since the sixth grade so I knoo it long before."

"You certainly speak well," said Julie. She lay back in

CHAPTER I

The first part of the book is devoted to a general survey of the history of the subject. It begins with a brief account of the early attempts to explain the origin of life, and then proceeds to a more detailed consideration of the various theories which have been advanced. The author then discusses the evidence in support of each theory, and finally arrives at his own conclusions. The second part of the book is devoted to a more detailed consideration of the various theories which have been advanced. The author then discusses the evidence in support of each theory, and finally arrives at his own conclusions.

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her chair, keeping a firm grip on her glass. Spilling two in one evening would be too much.

It was a post-football-game party--a bring-your-own affair which had been at full strength for several hours, and having reached its peak, was now beginning to nod. The fact that C. C. B. had lost the game by an embarrassing margin seemed to bother no one; the loss was celebrated as lustily as any victory.

The setting was perfect for a fall party. It was a loft of a barn which had been redecorated into a suave home bar and rumpus room, connected to the main house by a passageway fitted out in a nautical motif with all the instruments of a ship's bridge painted on the wall, and even a mahogany ship's well mounted under a small window at the half-way point. The rumpus room itself was a dimly-lit, low ceilinged place, whose pine panelled walls had been burned with appropriate bibulous mottos. The bar in one corner had proven to be woefully small to service the thirty-to-forty young people present, so a table with several tubs of ice cubes, and bottles of beer, liquors, and mixers had been hurriedly brought in by several of the more energetic boys who seemed to be thoroughly familiar with the procedure.

In another corner was the inevitable phonograph machine whose services were battled over by several opposing parties. A small group of girls wanted to dance and insisted on soft,

slow music which could barely be heard over the noisy conversation. As the evening wore on they kicked off their shoes and danced stocking-footed on the hardwood floor. The later it got, the stronger the drinks became, the more intimate the dancing. One athletic couple made it a point to slip in a hot record now and then, to which they promptly performed an agile, eye-catching, sweaty routine. Two other boys had written a very bad school fight song for a contest. They had recorded it somewhere, and occasionally its watery strains blared forth from the loudspeaker. All these musical variations were combined with and pitted against a running performance of a self-made boogie-woogie artist on the piano in the opposite corner.

A great many people of all kinds had been at the party. Nicky Luce came without a girl, and gathered a number of intellectual young men about him. For a few minutes Julie had been with Joe on the fringes of the group, and throughout the evening the refrain of their recitations kept echoing through her head like a nonsense jingle.

I grow old...I grow old...

I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

...Do I dare to eat a peach?

I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk
upon the beach.

Al's friend Tommy was there, disdainful of everyone,

talking loudly, gesticulating wildly. The Scruggs boys were there--Virgil taciturn in a corner, taking it all in, Chester everywhere at once, enjoying himself tremendously, his laugh ringing out frequently above the hub-bub. Everyone liked Chester because he could laugh so wonderfully. He had stopped to talk with Julie once. An argument had arisen between him and a short-haired, husky girl called Alex, and Julie had been called in to referee.

"Do you know anything about cheese, honey?" Chester had asked as she passed them.

"A little," she said hesitantly. "Why?"

"I've been saying that Roquefort cheese is made of goat's milk, and Alex, here, is trying to say it comes from lambs."

"Ewe's milk," said Alex.

"I'm afraid I don't know," Julie had said apologetically, and passed on, murmuring something to the effect that her knowledge of cheese was limited to the cottage and cream varieties.

Now it was getting late. The liquor had run out, and perhaps a third of the guests had left. The fire was getting uncomfortably hot on Julie's back, and she was tired of talking about comparative school systems to the Norwegian boy. The host, a moon-faced, pleasant young man was passing her chair, and she caught his arm.

"You were just talking to Joe," she said. "Has he said

anything about getting home?"

"Home?" The host looked pleasantly offended. "My lord, child, it's only 12:45. Joe never goes home until three. You may ask him if you please. God be with you..." and he passed on to speak to the girl Alex, who had been waiting for him.

Julie made her apologies to the foreign student and went over to talk to Joe, walking in a determinedly straight line. She had been sitting on her left leg, and the knee was stiff, so she walked very slowly. What she had had to drink had nothing to do with it. Just a stiff knee.

Joe was genially light-headed but objected to being forced to leave. "It's not even one, yet," he said. "Nobody would give us a ride."

"But I promised Mom I'd be home at one," Julie persisted.

"Okay, honey--you find someone to take us and I'll see that you get there." He turned back to the conversation.

So Julie, left to her own devices, hunted out the host and put her problem to him in her most appealing manner, finishing with a flattering, "surely you must have friends who wouldn't mind coming to a poor forlorn girl's assistance."

"Maybe so, maybe so," said the host. "Are you afraid of jeeps?"

"No, I think they're cute."

"My child, I can guarantee that you'll be mortally afraid of them after tonight. Do you see that small, tired-looking

boy over there? His name is Gus. He's a terrifying driver, but I'm sure he'll help you. God be with you."

Gus, as the host had said, was more than willing to take anyone anywhere. By the time Julie had convinced Joe that it was time to go, Gus was racing the motor impatiently in the yard. Tommy decided to come along for the ride and was hotly indignant at being put in back, but Joe insisted that he be given the front seat to facilitate the shooting of Indians on the way, and refused to move. As they roared out of the yard, Tommy was sitting up on the box behind Gus, Julie was up on the one behind Joe, and Joe had already killed one Indian and wounded another.

"Where are we going?" Gus barely turned his head toward his passengers, then hunched himself over the wheel like a sulky driver.

"The Alamo!" yelled Joe.

"The Alamo!" echoed Tommy, grabbing the rail as they swung sharply out of the driveway. "Whoopee!"

"Cambridge!" shouted Julie at the top of her lungs. "We're taking me home--remember?"

"The Alamo has it, two to one," said Gus. He had the little jeep up to fifty already, and each time he passed another car he swung out sharply, forcing the two back seat passengers to hang on for their lives. Joe, in front, swayed back and forth with the motion of the car, taking pot-shots

at everything they passed with his imaginary six-shooter. All the pedestrians and trees were Indians; all other vehicles were buffalo.

Then they were on a long straight stretch of empty parkway. Gus opened the throttle wide and relaxed a little, when Tommy reached forward and put his hands over the driver's eyes.

"Blind flying!" he shouted, and for nearly a hundred yards the jeep careened unguided down the road. Julie nervously watched the edge of the road coming closer. A year passed. At the end of the second year she could contain herself no longer.

"Look out!" she screamed.

Tommy relaxed his hold. For another mile the jeep was once again under comparative control. The words of the host went through Julie's mind: "I can guarantee you'll be mortally afraid of jeeps after tonight. God be with you." She glanced over at Gus. He was completely relaxed, his calmness reassuring.

Then the parkway was behind them. They swept through a red light, heedless of a flash of headlights and the blare of a horn a few feet to their left. As they picked up speed again, Julie noticed that a car was following close behind.

"This guy wants to race," said Tommy, following Julie's glance. "Don't let him pass you, Gus." Tommy's eyes glinted

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The study was conducted using a qualitative research design. The data was collected through interviews with participants who were selected through purposive sampling. The data was then analyzed using thematic analysis to identify the main themes and sub-themes. The results of the study are presented in the following sections.

The first theme identified was the importance of the study. Participants emphasized the need for more research in this area and the potential benefits of the study. The second theme was the methodology used in the study. Participants discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the research design and the data collection methods. The third theme was the results of the study. Participants presented the findings of the study and discussed the implications of the results.

The study has several limitations. First, the sample size was small, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Second, the study was conducted in a specific context, which may not be representative of other contexts. Third, the study was a qualitative study, which may not provide the same level of statistical significance as a quantitative study. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the research area.

in the glare of the headlights. His face looked almost black--like a coal miner's.

This section was more heavily settled than the parkway had been. There were just enough other cars on the road to keep their opponents from daring to pass. Several times he blew his horn and started around, only to be forced back by an oncoming vehicle. Finally, however, they came to another open section, and this time he was not to be denied. He had a much bigger car than the jeep, much more powerful, but Gus was not one to give up without a fight. He pulled over to make room like a true sportsman, then put the accelerator to the floorboard.

The wind in Julie's face forced tears out of her eyes. She could hear nothing but its roar. Dimly in front of her she could see Joe still obsessed with his Indians, oblivious of the race. She looked down at the ground ripping past the rear wheels, and quickly looked up again. The big car had inched up beside them now, and was still slowly gaining, an inch at a time.

Half a mile ahead, coming toward them was another car, its lights already glaring faintly on the jeep's dusty windshield. Gus grabbed the wheel more tightly, hopeful that the oncoming car would force their opponent to drop back. Five seconds...ten seconds. Still they were losing ground. The oncoming car was close, its lights blinding.

Suddenly Gus realized there was something in his path. A parked car. To touch the brakes would be suicide. Another second would be too much. With a quick snap of the wheel he swerved around it, but as he swung Julie and Joe were catapulted out of their seats.

It seemed to Julie that it happened very slowly. Afterwards she had a calm, clear memory of the windshield tilting around upside down in front of her, then under her. All sound had stopped, as in a dream. Then she was rolling over and over in the gravel. The next thing she remembered was Tommy beside her, half holding her in his arms. Her whole body was one tremendous ache.

"Are you okay, Julie? Are you okay?" he kept asking.

"I think so," she gasped. "Where's Joe?" She tried to get up, but Tommy forced her to lie back in his arms. Twisting her head, she could dimly see Gus standing over a dark figure on the pavement. Another man was running up from somewhere. No sound at all. Absolute silence.

Joe had been thrown out with Julie, but while she had landed and rolled in a driveway, he had landed head first on a granite curbstone, crushing his skull. He had died instantly.

CHAPTER 16

Al and Kit were sitting down by the river road in the same spot where they had sat nearly a month ago on their first afternoon together. It was a dramatic touch that appealed to Al, having their first and last minutes together in the same setting. Nearly two in the morning. Fresh, faintly moist little breezes blew in from the river, still quite warm for the end of October. Wearing only a sport jacket, Al was not at all cold with Kit sitting close beside him. The only light, except from an occasional passing car, came from the dial of the radio which was softly playing in the background.

In fifteen minutes they would have to start back to the dorm, but as yet Al had been able to find no way to tell her that this was to be their last night together. He had spent the last half hour on a dissertation concerning his low moral character--without mentioning Mary--to debase himself in her eyes, but she had made it all the harder by being sweet and understanding. The girls in Europe were so far away that it was easy to forgive. She herself had never been immoral, but she didn't expect, she said, that men should live up to the same standards as long as they could be true, once they had fallen in love.

So Al had launched a tirade against love and marriage, vehemently declaring he believed in neither. Kit laughed at him, yawned, and suggested that they start home. The two

o'clock news was already coming on. She was sleepy.

Annoyed, Al leaned back in his seat. Her refusal to be serious about his build-up unsettled him. He had had the entire scene completely outlined in his mind, to the final speech and a few soft tears. Now the speech would not only sound crude, it would sound silly.

The news announcer droned on. Al was so intent on his own thoughts that he missed the first part of the report on the accident. It was the sound of his sister's name from the loudspeaker that brought him to the edge of his seat.

"One has been killed and one injured in an automobile accident early this morning, when they were thrown out of a speeding jeep in Brighton. Dead is Joseph F. Mulligan, twenty-five, a student at Boston's City College. Julia Mae Manthorne, nineteen, also a student at C. C. B. was hurt, although her injuries were not believed to be serious. They were both thrown from the open vehicle as it sideswiped a parked car. Neither of the other occupants was injured."

For a moment Al sat in blankness, not even conscious that Kit was beside him. She came out of it first.

"Did you hear that?" She asked, shaking his arm gently.

"The last of it," he said numbly. "I wasn't listening at first. What did it say?"

"Julie injured, Joe killed."

"I wasn't sure." Al dropped his head down on his arms

for a moment, yet with the faintly guilty feeling that his grief-stricken attitude was not quite genuine. He wondered whether Kit were watching him, and whether she thought him a phony. He couldn't make it real. Just because somebody said Joe was dead, didn't make him have to be dead. Big, virile Mulligan...of all those worthless bastards at that party, why did it have to be Joe...a guy who was so alive and who loved life so much...No laws. The guy that said the universe was run by laws was out of his head...Pure chance, or an unfriendly god...which was it?

This was different from Dad's dying, though. When you thought about it, you knew Joe was dead all right. Dad's death never seemed quite real. Even now he didn't feel dead. You just got numb so you didn't feel it, but there was no anesthesia with Joe's death. "Dead is Joseph F. Mulligan". Just a name. What was Joseph F. Mulligan to a radio announcer.

Julie!

Where was she? Did Mother know? Poor Julie...what can you say to someone like that?

"We've got to get going." Al started to life, kicking the engine over, gunning it nervously. In his effort to turn the car around in a hurry, he did a clumsy job of it and was forced to take an extra cut, swearing to himself. The last time he backed into the road he did it without looking and almost hit a passing truck.

"Why the hell didn't he blow his horn!" he yelled.

"Trucks aren't supposed to be on this parkway anyhow."

Angrily he ground the gears and raced off in the direction the truck had taken, straining the car to its limit. If the truck driver had blown his horn, Al would have been equally incensed.

Kit, who had been quietly watching him now put her hand on his arm. "Al, honey...Take it easy. Where are we going?"

He shook his head grimly and stepped harder on the gas, leaning the car into the bend of the road as it followed the curve of the river. It felt good, holding the road that way.

"Al, Al." She tugged on his sleeve. "Slow down a minute. I want to talk with you."

As suddenly as he had started, Al slammed on the brakes, skidding the car to a stop. Then he turned on her furiously. "If you're worrying about being late to the dorm..." he began.

"Stop!" She put her hand over his mouth and held it a moment until he subsided. "Now listen to me," she said. "There are a number of people who are going to need your help tonight, and need it badly. Your getting all excited isn't going to do any good."

"So what do you want me to do," Al said sullenly.

"The first thing we've got to do is get to a telephone. It isn't going to be any help to your mother if we rush home

only to find she's at the hospital. Where's the nearest telephone?"

"There's an all-night beanery about half a mile down."

"Good. Let's go."

Al started up, more calmly now that he felt sure of Kit's staying with him. Her "we" had not missed its point. "What will you do about the dorm?" he asked.

"That can wait. Nobody will have nervous prostration over me, and I certainly have a good excuse if I don't even get back until morning."

A square illuminated pink sign with the word "Eat" appeared ahead in a group of darkened buildings. Al wanted Kit to wait for him in the car, but she insisted on coming with him, and to save time he agreed. Inside, the dazzling brightness and the hot, acrid odors of onions and coffee were almost sickening after the cool October air. Everything was glass and highly polished chromium. Al noticed with relief that there was only one quiet couple at the round bar, both absorbed in their food.

Going to the phone, he dialed his number shakily, without any idea what he would say to his mother. Kit stood quietly beside him eyeing the printed menu above the counter.

"What do I do if she isn't there?" he asked after the fifth ring.

"Call the police...Keep trying the house, though. She

might possibly be asleep."

"What if she doesn't know..." he began nervously, but his mother's answer at the other end interrupted him.

"Albert," she said recognizing his voice, "where have you been?"

"I'll tell you later," he said. "Have you heard?"

"Yes. I've been going nearly out of my mind trying to get in touch with you. Why didn't you call before?"

"I just found out myself. I got to a phone as fast as I could."

"Where have you been? You see now why I want you home at a reasonable hour. When I needed you..."

"Yes, yes, Mother. Let's not go through that now. Please. Is Cliff there?"

"No. I'm all alone." Her voice became more hysterical. "They had been drinking, Albert. I've been so afraid of whisky all along...the police said they were all drinking." He could hear her sobbing at the other end.

"Have you called the hospital? Do you want to go over, now?"

"Yes, I've called them several times and I called the police. Should I get a policeman to take me over? Where are you now?"

"Just a minute," said Al, and covered the mouthpiece with his hand. "She's going crazy," he said to Kit. "Do you know

whether there are any taxis open now, or would it be quicker for us to go get her?"

"Let her call a taxi. We can meet her at the hospital."

"Mother...Call the Yellow Cab Company, and we'll meet you there. What hospital is it?"

"City Hospital. They won't let you in. I can only go because I'm a nurse. You may as well come home and get to bed." She said it with the air in which she used to hand out punishment.

"We'll wait outside the hospital for you," Al said in a positive tone. "Does Julie know about Joe?"

"I'm going to have to tell her, I suppose...What did you want me to do?"

Al repeated the instructions again, and when he finally hung up, the receiver was covered with perspiration from his hand.

"What are we going to eat?" Kit said calmly.

"Eat!" he exploded. Somehow the idea of food seemed sacrilegious.

"Certainly. We have time enough, and if we're going to be up most of the night, we'll be better off with some food in us. What'll we have?"

It took them some time to locate City Hospital, and when they did find it, the situation was far from reassuring.

Al had pictured a big, evergreen-protected parking lot, but the hospital was located in a tenement district with no parking facilities at all, and they were forced to wait in the street. Al was more uncomfortable about it than he would admit to Kit. He was familiar with the South End's reputation--one of knife fights, rape and murder. Once the sun had set, no self-respecting woman was to be seen on the street.

At five after three in the morning not much was stirring, but there was the feeling that, even late at night, life was still going on--still a restless, subterranean, subhuman undercurrent of unhealthy vitality, like the rats that come out under dark's cover. A tavern, not a block away, still seemed to be doing business. An occasional figure stumbled in or out. The dark, hulking brick buildings were crowded together like cliff-dwellings. The cobblestone pavement was littered with paper that blew aimlessly here and there. The only light, other than from the hospital gates and the faint glow from the bar ahead, came from the gaslamps which illuminated the second story windows much better than they did the streets. A few blocks away the stark, thousand-legged elevated poised silent over Dover Street like a giant hookworm living off the city's entrails. A soot-covered train clattered down its spine after stopping briefly in the billboard-walled station.

For a few minutes Kit and Al sat silently waiting in the open car, each wondering how long Mrs. Manthorne would be, each

hoping it would not be too long. Suddenly, there was a man lurching down the street toward them, half in, half out of the gutter, muttering to himself. The hair bristled on the back of Al's head. He could feel Kit stiffen beside him. When the man was almost upon the car he became aware of its presence and stopped in annoyed bafflement as though he were accustomed to having the street to himself at this hour. Then he crossed over, and continued his progress in the same manner he had come.

As soon as the man's muttering died away, Al jumped out and put the top up with Kit's willing assistance. When they climbed back in, the canvas covering was somehow comforting. A police cruiser rolled quietly by, slowing briefly to peer at them.

"I wonder when she's coming," Al said softly.

"Pretty soon probably, or she'll at least come out and tell us what to do. She wouldn't leave us out here any longer than she had to."

"She's probably forgotten we're here."

"What if she does? She certainly is to be excused under the circumstances...What time is it?"

Al held his watch up to the light. "Three thirty-five."

"Mm." She snuggled up against his shoulder. "I'm not scared with you here, nor so cold. It's awful dark in this section though."

"Isn't it," he agreed absently. His mind had gone back to his sister and to Joe. Maybe it was a mistake about Joe... No, Mother had known, too. How would Julie feel? Al couldn't even imagine. He tried to picture Kit dead, but it wasn't the same. What a grisly business...

"I wonder if Julie knows yet?" he said aloud.

"She will soon enough, if she doesn't already. Don't think about it."

"Poor Joe."

"Poor Joe nothing," Kit pulled away from him and sat up indignantly. "Poor Joe's family, poor Julie, poor us, but not poor Joe. He lived hard and died early. The world has probably lost a good writer, but what can we do about it. Think about something else."

"How can I? Yesterday--last night...there was Joe alive, walking around and talking, using his tongue and lips and eyes--just like I'm doing this minute. Now there's nothing... not even an end. An interruption, but no continuation. How can it just stop that way? Why was it him instead of me or you..."

"I know," she murmured. "There, but for the grace of God...What are your plans for the rest of tonight and tomorrow?"

"God, I don't know. Depends on what happens, I guess."

"What about meals?"

"Oh hell," said Al in his most offhand tone. Food never

concerned him when he wasn't hungry. "Mother'll probably scrape something together."

"Will she?" Kit sat back quietly in her seat. From even her slight acquaintance with Mrs. Manthorne's house-keeping it seemed to her that the likelihood of Al's getting a can of beans was very small.

"Well hell. Maybe she won't. She'll be tired," said Al, defending his Mother for the first time in several months. Then as it occurred to him that he might have to get meals himself--"She'll probably go to bed and I'll have to bring her meals up."

"Us to bring her meals up, dear." She squirmed around to face him, full of enthusiasm over her projected plans. "I've already decided what we're going to have for breakfast. I'll make some cornbread, and we can have bacon and eggs-- oh yes, and orange juice. We mustn't have you getting scurvy." There was an exultance in her manner. At last she had found something worthwhile to do, a place where she would really be necessary.

"Sounds wonderful," said Al amused, "except that I don't think there have been any oranges in the house for at least two weeks."

"We'll buy some in the morning, then. As soon as we get back to your house we'll all get a little sleep, or if it's too late we'll put your mother to bed and get her breakfast,

and then sleep afterward ourselves."

Watching her, Al's amusement changed to gratitude--more than gratitude. The ineffable, almost instinctive warmth you feel for somebody who knocks herself out trying to help when you most need it. The way you feel about your favorite dog when he senses that you're unhappy and curls up beside you and pushes. The lights behind her head caught the fuzzy fringe of her hair, giving her an incandescent silver halo. Suddenly, Al caught her in his arms and held her to him.

"You're a sweetheart," he said.

When Mrs. Manthorne finally came out it was after four o'clock. Kit and Al were nearly asleep, but they woke up fast enough when she said she was not going home with them.

"I didn't mean to keep you waiting out here," she said, "especially when I knew I would have to stay on the rest of the night." All trace of hysteria had left her now, but the calm that had come over her was unnatural. When she spoke it was as from a dream, or as though she were drugged, her voice unemotional, flat. "Julie's just now gone to sleep. I'm down for only a moment to send you people home."

"Can't I stay with her?" Al asked. "Couldn't I sneak in? Kit would drive you home. You need rest, Mom. You look awful." He was genuinely concerned...Mrs. Manthorne swayed slightly on the sidewalk, her eyes deep, cavernous shadows.

"I'm beyond sleep," her lips smiled. "Even if you could get in, you're not her mother. I know you're trying to help," she added, seeing his hurt expression.

"Have you time to relax in the back seat and talk for a moment?" suggested Kit. "It might rest you a little." She reached and opened the back door, and before Mrs. Manthorne could make any objections, she was ushered in.

"I suppose a moment's rest would help," she sighed and sank back into the seat. "Julie is probably too heavily drugged to wake right away." Then she was quiet, so quiet that Al, hearing her heavy, regular breathing, wondered whether she had fallen asleep.

"Does she know about Joe?" Kit asked after a moment's silence. Her calm voice put Mrs. Manthorne at ease. Again the warm wave of gratitude passed through Al.

"Yes. She seemed to know even before I told her, but she's had so many hypodermics that she doesn't care too much. It'll be worse when she wakes up. That's why I have to stay with her."

The front door of the hospital opened and two nurses came out talking in low tones. Hearing them coming, Mrs. Manthorne sat up nervously, but they passed the car without even looking.

"Not for us..." Kit's cool voice like a gentle hand easing Mrs. Manthorne back into the dark corner of the seat.

"How bad is Julie, Mom?" The inevitable question. It

had to come sometime.

Mrs. Manthorne drew her breath sharply. "It's pretty terrible I hardly knew her. All the skin on one side--even neck and face--gone...scraped right off. Clothing ruined. One shoe missing. The wounds are full of dirt and grime where she landed in a cinder driveway...I suppose we should be thankful she's alive. They have her under observation for possible fractures or internal injuries."

"Did she know how it happened?" Al asked. "Was the jeep badly smashed?"

"She's still hazy about it, but I talked to one of the boys who was with them. Tommy somebody. He says the jeep didn't hit anything, but that there was a car parked in the road. Julie and Joe were thrown out as they swerved to avoid it."

"They must have been going like hell."

"That's what I thought..." for the first time, Mrs. Manthorne's voice rose above the dead monotone, then dropped back..."but this boy insists they were only doing thirty."

"All the more reason to think they were speeding. Who was doing the driving?" Al's face assumed the grimmest possible expression. "I'd like to talk with him."

"What would you do, baby? Take a shotgun to him?" Kit patted his knee.

Mrs. Manthorne reappeared from her corner, opened her

door. "I'll have to go. She may be awake even now."

From force of habit, an impatient sound rose in Al's throat, but Kit covered up for him. "Is there anything we can do, Mrs. Manthorne? How long do you expect to stay?"

"At least until morning. I don't know, really. There's an empty bed next to hers where I may be able to lie down for a few minutes. The other nurses there have been awfully sweet to both of us. They appreciate my being a nurse, and I've tried to help around the ward."

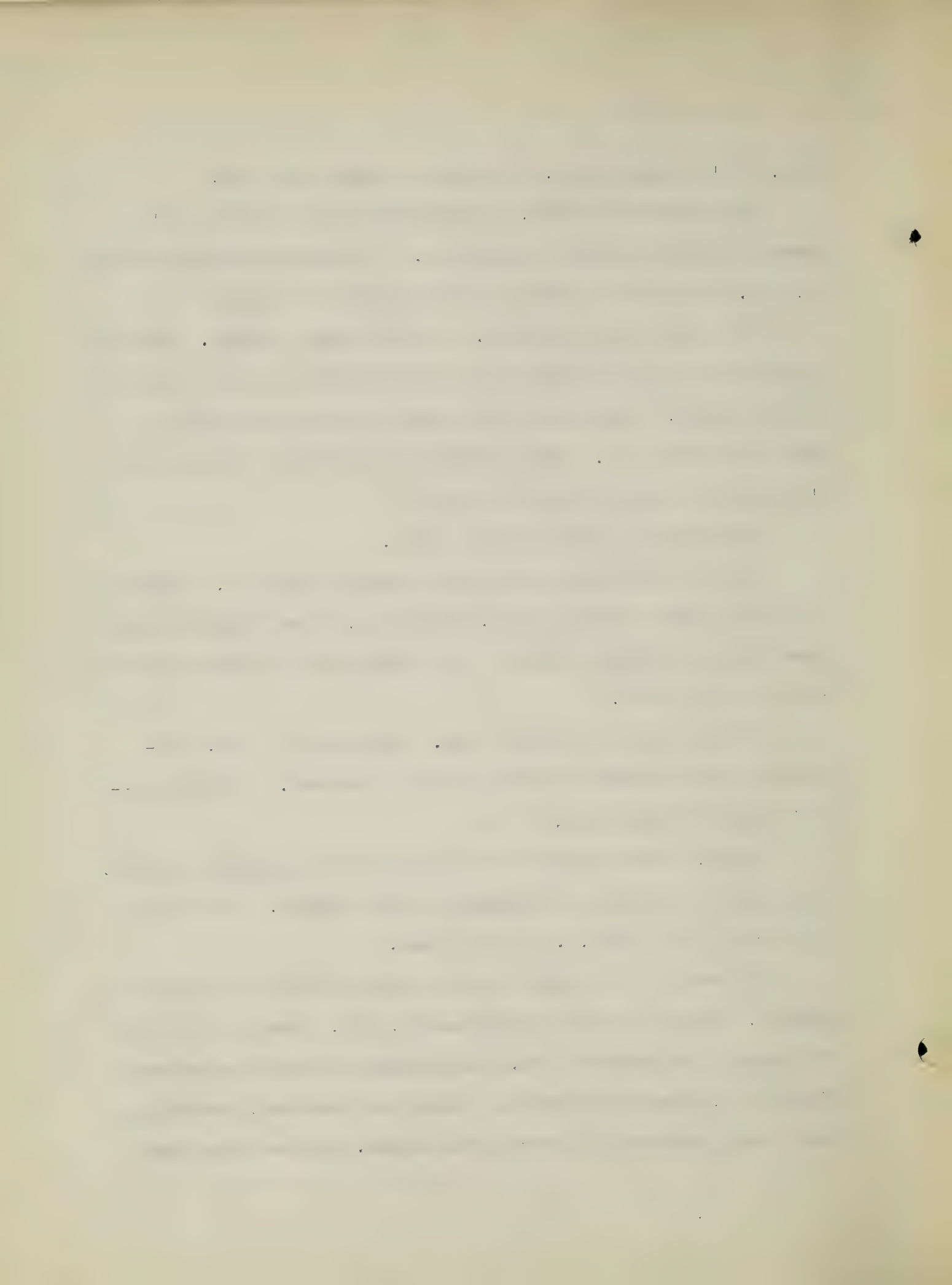
"When can we come up?" Al asked.

"We can find that out later, honey," said Kit. "Would it be all right with you, Mrs. Manthorne, if we stayed at the house and got things settled? You could call us when you were ready to come home."

"That sounds wonderful, Kit. Thank you." Mrs. Manthorne inched herself painfully out of the car. "Oh Albert-- Julie wanted cigarettes."

"Sure," said Al, glad to be able to do something useful. He handed the remains of his pack to his mother. "Tell her I'll bring more later...and ice cream."

The rest of the night and all the next day Al talked to himself. He had plenty to talk about, too. What to do about Kit especially bothered him. She stayed by him every minute, filling in, untangling snarls, foreseeing problems, smoothing over every potential discord with Mother. By the time they



arrived back at the house, neither of them felt like sleeping so he taught her cribbage and they played and talked until seven when Clifton came downstairs. In the excitement he had been completely forgotten. Again Kit slid tactfully over an unpleasantness. When Clifton prepared to be hurt at being left out, and Al prepared to be annoyed at the pettiness of it, Kit sent Al out to check kitchen supplies and privately brought Clifton up to date on all the details. In the end Clifton was quite flattered by the attention.

This, then, was the new Kit, almost superhuman in the emergency. All Al's desire to break with her was wiped away. He wished more than ever that he had never seen Mary Porterfield Mitton. If there could only be some way to wipe Mary off the books, to do away with her, at least to undo what the two of them had done. Why the hell did they have to be sisters, anyhow? Somebody must be to blame for that. Al decided finally that the only thing to do would be to tell Kit the truth--later.

As soon as the stores were open Kit took him shopping and made sure he bought enough to last at least a week, especially the things that would be easy to cook--hash, beans, spaghetti, and a peck of potatoes. She cooked breakfast, made a lunch for Clifton and sent him off to school like a practiced mother. Then came the letdown.

There was nothing more either of them could do but wait

for Mother to call. For a few minutes they sat around listening to the radio, but there were no interesting programs, not even any decent music. Al picked up the cribbage board and looked questioningly at Kit, but she shook her head, yawning. Finally he rose and tried to call the hospital, but could get no more information than that the patient was comfortable.

After trying the radio again in vain, Al left Kit to guard the phone and went to the corner for a paper. She met him at the door when he came back.

"Any word yet?" he asked.

"No. What does the paper say?"

"It's here on the second page. I haven't had time to read it."

There was a picture of Joe at the head of the column, a blown-up snapshot portrait, but a good one, almost romanticized--half face with a white scarf knotted at the throat. The story gave only a few more details than the radio announcement had given--family names and the names of the other occupants of the jeep. It still erroneously reported that the jeep had been in collision with another car.

"Good picture," said Al, folding the paper back for stiffness and holding it at arm's length. "Looks like him."

"Yeah," was the best she could summon.

"It's hard to believe, isn't it?" He sat down on the

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edge of the couch, still holding the picture. As it had come last night, the faint conscience prick burred now. He tried to concentrate on Joe, to feel sorry for Joe, to see the tragedy in Joe's death, but the more he concentrated, the more he saw a picture of Albert Manthorne sitting on the edge of his seat staring brokenly at his late friend's picture... a phony. No, goddammit, not a phony. Joe was dead...it was a goddamn shame...After three years of playing tag with eternity in the war, to come home and die in a ride with the boys..."The man with the brightest future"...the yearbook dedication...and Julie, alone.

Kit put her hand gently on his arm, then took the paper with its picture away from him. "Try not to think about it. You'll only work yourself all up. After all, you weren't that intimate with him."

"I know, but it's so damned ironic--like Tennyson's Hallam. Can you imagine how his mother is going to feel--her one odd chick, who defied her, and who was worth a hundred of the others."

"Does it make you feel better to talk it out?"

"I don't know...You know, something just occurred to me. I always thought he was after Julie for her--well, physical attraction, but there are lots of sexier girls than Julie. Maybe she gave him something bigger than we realize, if nothing more than the satisfaction of being responsible for

a lonely kid..." he stopped self-consciously..."or am I just being maudlin?"

Kit let her head drop comfortably on his shoulder. "We all have to be maudlin sometimes. I'm glad you can unbend enough to be that way with me...did you notice that the story still said that the cars hit?"

"I wondered about that. Maybe we could call Tommy and find out from him," He sat up, forcing her to sit up too.

"Your Mother's call," she reminded him.

"Oh hell." He slumped back onto the couch and pulled her down beside him. "Come here, baby. I need consolation."

"Not too much, though," she warned, relaxing in his arms.

The consolation continued in its ethical, sleepy manner for half an hour before Mrs. Manthorne's call finally came through. Al lumbered to the phone.

"Well, the worst is over," announced Mother in a none-too-cheerful tone.

"How is she?"

"No internal injuries, no broken bones. Probably there will be no serious scars..."

"Good."

"But she's emotionally exhausted now--poor child." Mrs. Manthorne's voice broke for a moment.

"So are you," sympathized Al.

"She woke about 5:30, and from then until half an hour

ago she wept. She's still a little cloudy, but the rain has mostly cleared away." Mrs. Manthorne's own clouds became even more noticeable. "For the first time," she continued, "I'm almost glad I was forced to go through your father's death. It's given me the strength and the understanding I could never have otherwise had." She was laughing through her tears, almost out of control.

"Easy, dear." Al wished Kit could be there to help.

"She was awfully in love with him, Albert. She'll need all the help and love we can give her."

"When can we come up to see her? We've been sitting here biting our thumbs, waiting to hear from you."

"Visiting hours start at two, so get yourself some food. Is Kit still with you?"

"Yes." Al glanced into the living-room. Kit was asleep, but he lowered his voice. "She's been sweet, Mother. She hasn't left my side for a moment. You should see the groceries the two of us got."

"That's nice dear." Mrs. Manthorne sounded as though she were wiping her nose, but underneath, Al detected a reflection of his own "yes, dear" tone.

"What about you?" he asked. "Have you had any sleep?"

"What sort of nurse would I be if I couldn't get along without a night's sleep?" she said proudly. "Don't worry about me. Just make sure the two of you get here on time."

"We'll be early," Al promised.

CHAPTER 17

If the exterior and surroundings of City Hospital were forbidding, its interior was even more so. Kit and Al entered into a mustard-yellow corridor with asbestos-covered pipes running along the ceiling. This serpentine passageway led them on and on, luring them by an occasional sign, "Information and Reception Desk", accompanied by a faded red arrow.

"This can't be the front entrance," Al said, lowering his voice. Lighted by intermittent, dirty windows above the eye level and occasional twenty-five watt bulbs, it was the sort of hallway that made you lower your voice. Faint anti-septic odors were obscured by the heavier smell of urine.

"It didn't look like the same gate where we were last night," Kit murmured. Two white coated orderlies wheeled an old man on a table out from a branch hallway. Kit and Al stood aside to let them pass.

Eventually they came to a tired-looking elevator, solely occupied by a bored-looking, middle aged woman reading a newspaper.

"Could you tell us where the center desk is?" Al asked politely.

"Get in," she said not looking up.

Still reading her newspaper, she twisted a handle. The iron doors clapped shut, and they ascended one flight. The

attendant turned a page. "You're early. You'll have to wait. Report to the desk at your left as you leave the elevator." The doors opened, and snapped shut behind them, giving them barely time to escape.

"Pleasant, chatty girl," muttered Al, giving the indifferent doors a reproachful look.

"There's the desk," said Kit.

There it was indeed, a big round dark-stained affair, like a circular bar, with a tall round cabinet in the middle with pigeon holes full of index cards instead of bottles. On top of the cabinet was a yellow-faced electric clock with Roman Numerals. The angular hands snapped forward once a minute, then returned to their sulking immobility.

"We should get pictures," Al said quietly. "Good campaign material. The mayor could make all sorts of promises about this place."

"Shh," said Kit. She approached one of the two attendants, both of whom looked disgruntled because they couldn't read newspapers the way the elevator operator did. "We'd like to visit Miss Julia Mae Manthorne."

"Family?" said the attendant wetting her thumb and reaching for a blue slip.

"Yes."

"Both of yez?" The attendant looked sharply at first one, then the other.

"My sister-in-law," Kit said calmly. "He's her brother."

There was an awful silence while the woman scribbled on the blue slip, went to a pigeon hole to verify something, and came back to scribble something else.

"Ye gods," said Al under his breath. "You'd think Julie was in for thirty days."

The woman behind the desk looked up sharply, then went away to the other side of the desk.

"Now you've done it," said Kit. "We'll be taken in for the third degree as soon as she calls a cop."

In a moment, however, the woman returned to hand them each a yellow slip. Al looked at his. It had a big number six stamped on it, and "Ward 14" printed at the top. "You'll have to wait," the woman said. "Over there." She pointed to a large, railroad-type waiting room full of people that Al had not noticed before, since it was behind the desk and down three linoleum steps.

As they went toward it, Kit slipped her hand into Al's. "Do you mind my being your wife for an hour?"

"Only an hour?"

"That's up to you," she said in mock coyness.

"Too bad I can't take you out for fourteen days like a book. I could even renew you if you were good enough."

"Not me." Kit shook her head. "I'm a rare edition, You have to purchase me." She led the way to a seat. "What a

1. The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research. It also provides a brief overview of the literature review and the methodology used in the study.

2. The second part of the paper discusses the results of the study and the findings. It also provides a detailed analysis of the data and the conclusions drawn from the study.

3. The third part of the paper discusses the implications of the study and the recommendations for future research. It also provides a summary of the key findings and the overall conclusions of the study.

4. The fourth part of the paper discusses the limitations of the study and the areas for further research. It also provides a final summary of the study and the conclusions drawn from the research.

5. The fifth part of the paper discusses the significance of the study and the contributions it makes to the field. It also provides a final summary of the study and the conclusions drawn from the research.

depressing place."

Al nodded in complete agreement. The waiting room was like a grammar school auditorium, even to the lined-up folding seats, their back feet caught in long planks with slits for the feet to keep them in rows. The stage was occupied by the information desk, and another clock on the wall snapped off the minutes in unison with the one at the center of the stage. Everything in sight was either mustard-yellow or brown, even the sun coming through the high windows with a mustard-yellow tint. Crowded into the seats were apprehensive men and women, mostly in work clothes--tired people. Those who spoke at all did so in hushed tones, glancing surreptitiously up at the clocks. Al looked at his yellow slip for the fourth time.

"I'm number six," he said. "What are you?"

"Five," Kit answered. "I wonder if that means fifth and sixth ones in the ward or to see Julie."

Before there was further time for speculation, a tremendous invisible gong rang out. Everyone jumped up and rushed toward the door as though it had been a fire alarm. Al and Kit were swept along into another mustard corridor with asbestos pipes. An attendant spotted their yellow slips and shouted for them to take the elevator.

It was a different elevator, but the operator was a spiritual mate to the recent one. "Only ten at a time," she

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes the need for transparency and accountability in financial reporting.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and techniques used to collect and analyze data. It includes a detailed description of the experimental procedures and the statistical analysis performed.

3. The third part of the document presents the results of the study. It includes a series of tables and graphs that illustrate the findings of the research. The data shows a clear trend of increasing activity over time.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the implications of the findings. It suggests that the results of the study have significant implications for the field of research and may lead to further developments in the future.

5. The fifth part of the document concludes the study. It summarizes the main findings and provides a final statement on the importance of the research.

yelled, clapping the door shut in the face of an innocent Italian laborer, hat in hand. "Yellow slips--third floor, to your left." A considerable number of yellow slips got off and were herded to the left down a dark hallway.

Eventually they found Julie's ward. Once the walls might have been gleaming white, but years of sooty city air had coated them with grime that no amount of scouring could remove. All the beds save Julie's were occupied by wrinkled old women who seemed hardly conscious of their visitors if they were lucky enough to have any. The cast-iron beds were spaced at six feet, the only privacy being afforded by white curtains hung between them. At Julie's bed Al was surprised to find four other visitors, not counting Mother. There were Tommy, two girls whom Al had seen with Julie at school, and Virgil Scruggs, the quiet one. He and Tommy had brought a carton of cigarettes.

Julie herself was a strangely tragi-comic figure. She was dressed in a johnny much too big for her. Her legs and her bare feet, looking tremendous, extended down to meet her visitors. Loose bandages around her legs were visible under the johnny. Despite his mother's graphic description last night, Al was startled at the extent of Julie's scrapes and bruises. One whole arm, the neck, and the side of her face up into the hairline was one ugly oozing raw mass. Her sheets had not been changed since she had been admitted, and were

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes that this is essential for ensuring transparency and accountability in the organization's operations.

2. The second part outlines the various methods and tools used to collect and analyze data. This includes both traditional manual methods and modern digital technologies, highlighting the benefits of each approach.

3. The third part focuses on the role of the management team in overseeing the data collection process. It stresses the need for clear communication and coordination between different departments to ensure that data is collected consistently and accurately.

4. The fourth part discusses the challenges faced during the data collection process, such as incomplete data or discrepancies between different sources. It provides strategies to address these challenges and ensure the integrity of the data.

5. The fifth part concludes by summarizing the key findings and recommendations. It reiterates the importance of a robust data collection system and suggests areas for future improvement and research.

stained with dried brown blood and what looked like yellow unguent of some kind. Mrs. Manthorne sat beside her, constantly dabbing her arm and neck with a cooling solution from a porcelain basin. The welt on Julie's cheek had contracted the skin and pulled down the lower eyelid, giving her almost the appearance of a friendly St. Bernard dog, especially when she smiled.

She grinned at Kit and Al when they came up, then composed her features with an effort. "It hurts to smile," she said in explanation. "Hi, kids."

"Good girl," said Al. "You don't look too unhappy at all, considering everything."

"I'm all wept out," she answered, then turned her head to hear a whispered word from her mother.

Al noticed that everyone, even the woman in the bed across the ward, had a subdued expression of hurt and pity for Julie. There was a quiet air of restraint, yet of forced comedy; it was impossible to carry on a natural, casual conversation with someone who looked like that. Mother was exhausted. She had hurriedly combed her hair for the visitors, but her eyes were dark and heavy. Her mouth twitched constantly.

"You were lucky," said one of the girls in effort to be amusing. "You still have some skin left."

"You can't see most of where I'm scraped," Julie

answered. "I landed on my pratt. I'll show you if the men will retire." There was amusement in her eyes, but she kept her face straight.

So the men respectfully withdrew for a moment while Julie exhibited her wounds. She seemed even more cheerful when it was over--a nervous cheerfulness, a suppressed hysterical elation.

"Was it in the papers?" she asked Al.

He nodded. "You're big news." Too late, he caught his mother's warning look.

"Could you bring me a copy?"

"No," said Mrs. Manthorne positively. "Later, perhaps."

"Please, Mother."

Julie's effort to smile was too much for Mrs. Manthorne. "Go ahead, Albert," she said in a resigned tone, "but quickly."

"I've got the clipping." He fished it out of his wallet and handed it to his sister who glanced it over.

"They've got it wrong," she said. "We didn't hit anything. It was that darn parked car--right in the road. You see..."

"We all know it was, dear," said Mrs. Manthorne.

"The others don't," Julie insisted, and would not be satisfied until she had gone through it again in detail. "Poor Gus," she ended. "I hope he doesn't get into trouble. It

really wasn't his fault. I want to see him, so he'll know I'm not blaming him."

"Have you got enough to read to keep you entertained?" asked Kit.

"Yes." Julie pointed briefly to a small pile of magazines on the windowsill behind Mrs. Manthorne, then again picked up the clipping Al had given her. "It doesn't say anything about the funeral," she said, reading. "I suppose it's early yet. Do you think I'll be out in time to go to the funeral, Mom?"

"We'll see, dear." Mrs. Manthorne stood up and allowed Kit to take charge of Julie's raw arm.

"Mother's been swell," Julie announced, as Mrs. Manthorne left the group briefly. She turned to Al. "I know she doesn't want me to go to the funeral. She thinks it's going to upset me, but I've got to go...You'll help me get there, won't you, Al?"

"Sure," he said. "We'll do all we can."

It was with a sense of relief, when the end of the hour finally came, that the visitors departed and went their separate ways.

"Whew!" said Al, as he and Kit descended in the elevator. "Talk about uncomfortable scenes. You feel sorry for her, and you want to help her, but she'll drive you crazy the way she keeps harping on it. You'd think she'd want to forget it."

"She has to get it out of her system by talking it out," said Kit. "After all, honey, you were doing it, too."

"It's hard on others, though," Al commented. "We both get it from Mother, I guess."

"Let's call it a universal human trait," she suggested diplomatically.

CHAPTER 18

As Julie began to recover it became more and more apparent how much her behavior was like her mother's. Mrs. Manthorne contrived to have her kept in the hospital until after the funeral, but she remained only under strong protest. During her convalescence she constantly kept Joe and the accident in her mind and, as a result, in all her conversation. When her injuries healed well and quickly and she was congratulated on her quick recovery, she took pains to show where the gravel had been permanently imbedded in her arm--little black marks just above the elbow.

She kept it up to the degree where people were embarrassed to talk with her. They had had enough of death, but she kept bringing it back. She memorized the details of Joe's military burial, learned when she went to visit and comfort his mother. She took an active interest in Gus's trial, always defending him with an inexplicable loyalty. At first Gus appreciated it, but he too dreaded seeing her coming.

Finally Al, upon Kit's urging, took Julie aside and attempted to talk with her. While she did not take kindly to the criticism, she was gracious enough to be pleasant about it.

"After all, honey," Al told her, "you're not a widow.

You'll only make it harder for yourself by keeping the whole thing fresh in your mind." He was uncomfortable, as he spoke, both because he disliked giving unsolicited advice and because he was conscious that what he said was at best only a paraphrase of Kit's opinions on the matter.

"I know it," she answered, looking into her empty coffee cup. They were in the cafeteria across from school.

"I don't mean to scold," Al continued, "but I hate to see you taking after Mother...in that respect. You know how uncomfortable it makes everyone when she keeps on talking about Dad as though he were alive."

"She's only trying to keep him alive for herself," said Julie sulkily. If Al was going to criticize her by saying things about Mother, she would meet him on his own ground. "I understand better now than before," she added to make the point clear.

"But being mawkish and maudlin about it, having tears come at the mention of a name..."

"I don't do that." The defiant flash lit Julie's dark eyes for a second, then died as she returned to the contemplation of her coffee.

"Don't misunderstand me, honey. I'm only trying to help." Al reached over and patted her shoulder. "I just hate to see you so broken up about it. It would do you good to get out again. You haven't been anywhere at all since you got out of

the hospital."

"I have a date for Friday," she said with a half smile.

"Good girl" He patted her shoulder again. "You do understand that I'm trying to help, don't you. I want us to always stay close."

When Julie glanced up, there was a trace of tears in her eyes. "I've got a class," she said. "Coming?"

On Friday night, however, Al was less pleased about Julie's date. It was with Clifton. Although he and Clifton were on pleasant terms again, it bothered him that she should pick someone quite so dull. As far as anyone knew, Clifton was still enamored of his Ruthie. Any dates he might have with Julie were for Julie's sake--to give her a chance to go somewhere, to get her mind off herself. Big brother stuff.

Then, quite suddenly, Julie made an about face. She put away all signs of mourning. Any further mention of the accident disappeared. More and more often the telephone would ring--male voices asking for Julie became commonplace. It seemed to Al that she dated at least five different boys a week. At first most of them were people he knew from school, but gradually strange men of all types began coming to take her out--a number of them ones she had met at the roller-skating rink where she occasionally spent her evenings. What disturbed Al the most was that many of them were too old for her--men in their late twenties, and even one married soldier.

These questionable dates never did entirely replace those from school. There were still a few young esthetes she had met at the party who came, and every Friday and Saturday nights were saved for Clifton who talked less of Ruthie as time passed.

There were other changes in Julie besides the social ones. She seemed more light-headed, and on rare occasions she went off to her room to sulk alone. After the accident she had missed several weeks of school, but not enough to force her out, had she had an earnest desire to continue. Her simple solution to the problem was to wait until it really was too late to continue, then present the case to her mother with tears. Mother, of course, agreed to let her withdraw from her courses on the condition that she would start again in the February semester.

Mother had been especially lenient with her after the accident. Besides letting her drop out of school, she made no serious objections to the frequent dating despite the heterogeneous assortment of men she went out with. After all, she said, if Julie were ever to know the right man when he appeared, she would have to know all kinds. In any case, most of the less presentable ones came only once or twice before Julie decided she had had enough of them. Occasionally she and Mother would have a fight about the late hours Julie kept, but even this seemed to bother Mrs. Manthorne less.

"Julie needs this swirl of popularity to restore her

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self-confidence," Mrs. Manthorne said to Al, when he finally mentioned it. "After January she'll be back in school, so I'm letting her have her head for now."

By January she'll be pregnant if she isn't careful was Al's thought, but he limited himself to the comment that Julie's irregular meals and late hours would land her in bed at her present pace.

"I hope she does," Mrs. Manthorne answered in a satisfied tone. "I hope she wears herself out and is sick in bed for at least a week. It will be worth the doctor's bill to have her learn that there's a limit to what her body can take. Not only that but she'd be forced to take a few day's rest."

This shift in policy of Mother's was typical, Al felt. As long as he could remember, her ideas on the subject of discipline and the behavior that was desirable for young people had been subject to a series of major and minor changes. For when one theory misfired, it was scrapped and replaced by a new one. No wonder Julie took advantage of the present situation. The next new regime would come soon enough.

"Do you remember your father's pipe?" his mother was going on. "When you wanted it for Halloween, he let you take it without a word. I noticed that you showed no desire to smoke for a couple years after that night."

"This isn't quite the same, Mother."

"Of course it isn't. I keep my eye on her in my own way."

You'll notice it's only the nicer boys that she goes out with more than once, and she still saves weekends for Clifton."

Al wondered sometimes whether Julie dated Clifton solely to keep Mrs. Manthorne's suspicions quiet. As far as he could see, Julie had no real affection for Clifton most of the time. During weekends the two of them were thick enough--several times they spent all day Saturday together in Boston, and once she went home with him for a weekend visit with his family, but during the week when he had to study, she was always cool toward him, giving him the briefest possible indication of interest. Several times they argued furiously, but the rest of the family was never in on it. Surprisingly enough, Clifton seldom mentioned her to Al, and after the Ruthie episode, Al was satisfied to avoid talk of anything pertaining to Clifton's affairs of the heart.

As was his usual habit with Julie, Al kept his thoughts to himself, waiting for her to make the first move if she wanted help or advice. After all, he thought, he and Julie sometimes spent months with hardly more than casual conversation, but the old intimacy was always there underneath. The time would come when she would spring up any questions she had in mind herself.

That time did not come, however. Another three weeks passed, and December was only a few days away. Al's growing absorption with Kit, while it gave him less chance to see

Julie beyond those few mealtimes when both were home, served to make him more concerned about his sister. There seemed to be no solution to his own problems with Kit. The only choice was whether to tell her now or tell her later. The only basis for decision--which would hurt her more...would she be more liable to leave him now or later?...how much later? All thought of giving Kit up had completely gone, his main desire was to keep her, now. It occurred to him, ironically, that the one girl he most wanted to keep was the one who would have the most reason for leaving.

It was not easy to realize that he had done something wrong, something that had been both selfish and stupid; it was harder to know how to remedy it. Julie would simply laugh in his face if he were to start a halting sermon on the suffering of the uncelibate. She wasn't suffering. If he were, it appeared to be a mild dose, she would say. He wondered how much of her dating was just fun and how much was more serious. There was no way of telling. Best to let it ride.

There must have been twenty times he turned this over in his mind before that day when they fought about it. On that afternoon he had driven up to the house to find an ancient Ford parked blocking the driveway. Al's first reaction to old cars was always favorable. Anything mechanical made him curious. Any mechanical think in disrepair was a challenge.

This particular Ford, however, annoyed him. Its

condition was far beyond mere disrepair--it looked more like a sharecropper's car than one belonging to a boy. Whoever owned it had started to paint it blue but had given up after slapping a coat of paint on the hood and the two rear fenders. The rest of the body was a mottled black and brown. Rust had eaten away sections of the body at the back and along the running-boards. One front spring was broken, giving the body a list to the left. Inside, the upholstery had entirely given out and had been patched here and there with burlap. This was a car without life or pride--a horse recalled from pasture to duty pulling a garbage wagon. Al glanced at his own ancient but honorable Cadillac gleaming in the street, shook his head, and went into the house.

He sauntered into the living room to find Julie and a strange young man lying on the couch in each other's arms. On the floor beside them were half a dozen cans of beer, all empty but two. The young man had been so ardent in his attentions to Julie that he had not heard Al at the front door, but half sat up now, revealing a scraggly beard, and stared coldly at the interloper. Julie opened her eyes, then giggled.

"Hello, Albie," she said. "We weren't expecting anyone." She pushed the young man to a sitting position and sat up herself, straightening her skirt. "This is Jimmy Pope...meet my brother, Jimmy."

"How do you do?" said Al with a cool smile.

"Harya," said the young man, giving Julie a look that plainly indicated she had no right to have a brother. Seeing that Al showed no immediate signs of leaving, the young man took his feet from the couch and placed them in a scuffed pair of thick-soled brown shoes. This, Al decided, was the most unsavory one yet. He looked dirty. Not only his baggy, food-stained suit, but his sallow lumpy skin and unkempt hair made you wonder what diseases he carried. The beard was the final touch. Al had no intrinsic objection to beards, but this Pope person's beard appeared to have grown only because he was too lazy to shave. The idea of this hairy-faced individual lying down with Julie! Al shuddered inwardly. The mere thought of her touching him was repugnant. Seeing her sitting beside him in her starched cotton print, was like seeing a flower in a dung heap.

She had been drinking more than beer, it seemed. Her voice was high, her black eyes very bright. She tended to be giggly. There was an unnatural full flushed color in her usually pale cheeks.

The whole scene was so tawdry that Al, for the first time in his life, did not discreetly retire, but sat down to keep an eye on them until Mr. Pope should get the idea that it was time to go.

"When's Mother coming in," he asked, with a significant glance at the cans on the floor.

"Not until tonight. She called a little while ago," Julie answered. "I thought you and Kit were going out."

"Nope." Al settled comfortably in the arm chair and stretched. "I'm in for the evening, I guess." He stole a look at the young man who had found a magazine and was reading it with a bored expression.

"Haven't you studying to do?" The young man put his arm negligently around Julie's shoulder without looking up.

Al was so startled that the best retort he could summon was a sarcastic, "I beg your pardon. I didn't mean to interrupt you."

"Of course you did, but you can make up for it by leaving us now." Mr.. Pope turned a page.

"Have a beer," said Julie hurriedly. "We've already had too much." She giggled, coyly covering her mouth with her hand then controlled herself.

Al was on his feet, his fists clenched. "Just who the hell do you think you are?" He said through his teeth.

"Whose goddam house do you think this is, anyway?" He made the words sound as threatening as possible, but the absolute brass of this individual was so startling that he felt unsure of himself.

"If you continue to use such odious language," said the young man languidly looking up for the first time, "I shall be forced to retire." He said it as though he was sure the

house would collapse upon his departure.

Al's first impulse was to throw Mr. Pope bodily out of the house, but the fearful expression on Julie's face restrained him. There was also an inward loathing at the thought of touching him. He felt extremely unsure of himself yet his one desire was to get rid of Mr. Pope as fast as possible. "Will you leave if I say just an obscene word or two, or must I wrack my brain for especially filthy words?" he said as calmly as he could.

The young man rose. "It would seem that your good brother is too lacking in taste to allow us to continue our tete-a-tete," he said turning his back pointedly on Al. "Perhaps I may see you again under more pleasant circumstances?" Then he turned with great dignity and left the room.

Julie jumped up and followed him into the hall without a sound. In a moment, Al could hear them talking on the porch, then there was the sound of the Ford backing out of the driveway. It was with a tremendous sense of relief that he heard Julie coming back inside. Still trembling, half with fear, and half with anger, he went to the couch and opened one of the beer cans. It was warm and flat. Julie wandered in and plumped herself down in the armchair. When she finally spoke, her anger had sobered her. "What did you have to do that for?"

"Where on earth did you dig him out?" Al countered.

"He was cute." She said sullenly. "I wanted him to

stay."

"You're squiffed, Julie," he yelled. "You're crazy! Where's your taste? Where's your common sense? That guy was positively scrofulous. If you ask me..."

"Nobody's asking you," she snapped. She slipped off her shoes and curled up in the chair, her face to the wall.

Silence.

"Where did you find him?" Al finally asked more calmly, but not quite able to keep the incredulous tone out of his voice.

"I was hitch-hiking and he picked me up. He's a good kid." There was a rebellious, deny-it-if-you-dare tone to the last.

It was several more moments before Al spoke again. Whether she wanted to hear it or not, it was time someone spoke to Julie. Much more than this Pope person's respectability was at issue now. Hitch-hiking was too close a step to streetwalking.

"Julie." Al waited for her to look, but she continued to face the wall. He was tempted to get up and slap her, but he calmed himself. "I don't want you ever to hitch-hike again." He said it very slowly, giving significant emphasis to each word.

"Why," Not a question, but a response, I'll do what I goddam please.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes the need for transparency and accountability in financial reporting.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and techniques used to collect and analyze data. It includes a detailed description of the experimental procedures and the statistical analysis performed.

3. The third part of the document presents the results of the study. It includes a series of tables and graphs that illustrate the findings of the research. The data shows a clear trend of increasing activity over time.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the implications of the findings. It suggests that the results have significant implications for the field of study and may lead to further research in this area.

5. The fifth part of the document provides a conclusion and a summary of the key findings. It reiterates the importance of the study and the need for continued research in this field.

"Never mind why, just do as I say."

"I can take care of myself," she was weakening now, defending herself. Al jumped at the opening.

"Of course you can't take care of yourself!" he shouted, leaping up. He patted his shirt pocket. Empty. "Give me a cigarette."

"On the table." She lifted her head and pointed wearily. Al gave her one, lit one for himself and started pacing up and down the room.

"How do you think that Carol Whatever-her-name-was got butchered. She thought she could take care of herself, too. Somebody probably told her 'kick him between the legs', and when she did it was just enough to send the guy out of his mind."

Julie giggled.

"IT'S NOT FUNNY!" He screamed at the top of his lungs, his face bright red with indignation and helpless anger. "It's..." he lapsed into incoherence and went back to his pacing. "You don't know what your getting into."

"I've hitch-hiked before and nothing happened." She regarded him with amused eyes, now. Such histrionics were good entertainment.

"When?"

"How do you think Cliff and I got to his house that time? We certainly didn't get any help from you."

"Clifton had no business taking you hitch-hiking," he said, ignoring the dig. At the time they had wanted the car, the brakes weren't safe, but Clifton had not accepted this gracefully. The car was always a sore point. "I'll tell him what I think of it, too," he added.

"You'll do nothing of the kind. You'll mind your own business." Now she was shouting too, but there were tears in her eyes. Al saw that he was pushing too far and went to sit on the arm of her chair.

"Honey," he patted her shoulder, but again she refused to look at him. Unlike her mother, she was ashamed of her tears. "Look, Julie, you know I don't mean to upset you," he continued gently, "but you upset me, too. You've been going out with a terribly tough gang of guys lately. It isn't like you. You can't see what it does to your..." he stopped, thinking of his own experience with Mary and not Kit, but decided not to get into personal reference. "You may not suffer any now, but someday you'll wish you hadn't been running around this way. Please believe me. It'll come back to haunt you."

"I think I'm judge of that." Julie turned and giggled at him for the last time. "I'm the center of the universe. While I live, the world exists. When I die, the world ends. As long as I don't hurt anyone else..."

"Shut up!" Al slapped her mouth, not hard, but enough

that it hurt her feelings. She began to sob, making no more effort to hide it.

"I was wrong," he said, going back to his pacing. "Stop your bawling." Frantically he tried to think of a way to make her see, but the only way he could think of was telling her about himself and Mary, and now Kit. He hesitated a moment, then took the plunge. "Listen," he said, "I'll tell you how wrong I was."

"Go to hell." She picked up a shoe and threw it at him. It missed, but knocked Mother's battered vase from the tea table. By the time Al had picked it up, Julie was on her way up the stairs, sobbing to herself.

"Wait," he shouted, running into the hallway. "Listen."

"Go to hell." She continued up and into her room and slammed the door.

He stood undecided for a moment at the foot of the stairs. There would be no use following her. She wouldn't listen...but there must be some way to show her, to make her know. After all, it had been from him that she had gotten her ideas. He wandered back into the living room. A deck was lying on the bookcase. He picked it up and laid out a hand of solitaire on the tea table, but he couldn't force himself to stay still long enough to play it...He wished he could talk to Kit about it. She'd be the one person who could help...if only it hadn't been for Mary. Hell.

Finally, just to be moving, he went out to put the car in the yard, but changed his mind and headed out for Newton to see Nicky.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

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CHAPTER XIX

"You'll do nothing of the sort," said Nicky. "Your sweet puppy-dog honesty won't get you anywhere. The only thing for you to do is forget this girl." He went to the phonograph and supplied it with fresh fuel. "Be a dear, now and collapse on my bed as is your wont," he said over his shoulder. "Remove your shoes, however, and I'll get you something to drink."

Al did as he was bid with a wry grin at Nicky. "I don't think you take my problems seriously enough."

"Of course not. I'd be in my grave if I took your problems seriously. I can't even take my own to heart." He widened his round eyes and pointed a thin finger at Al. "Do you know I'm about to be disinherited by my Mother? Dear Sandra has decided her delicate boy must be shoved out on to the cold world to be properly bruised. Then supposedly I'll be a man. She's been into the Reader's Digest again." As the records began, he left the room, to return a moment later, armed with glasses, vermouth and gin.

"I should be home studying," he said. "Tomorrow I have to take a make-up for the astronomy test I cut. I don't know a damn thing about it."

"Of course you don't," said Nicky handing him a drink,

"nor will you. If you had any intention of studying you wouldn't have come, because you know you always stay until at least two."

"When are you going to be disinherited?" Al asked.

Nicky smiled his secret smile to himself at the sudden change of the subject. "I expect to be catapulted bodily from the front door at any moment. Both Sandra and Father have been making empty threats ever since Yale and I broke off relations, but yesterday Father found me a job in an office which I positively refused. Poor Father has been kind, but he had no defense against Sandra after that."

"What'll you do when they catapult you?"

"Who knows?" Nicky appeared unworried. "You didn't come to solace, however, but to be solaced."

"I thought you weren't interested."

"My dear, I'm interested in the very depths of your soul, and you're more than eager to reveal them to me...I saw your paramour at a party the other night by the way with her silent husband."

"Don't call her that," said Al uncomfortably.

"Why? It's a rather pleasant euphemism for that sort of girl."

"Poor Mary. She's all mixed up."

"Poor Mary, indeed. So are you mixed up. So is everyone. I've come to the obvious conclusion that all normal people are

hopelessly lost. Besides, Mary deserves no one's sympathy. She's a perfectly horrible girl. Do you know what she said that night? I think it's the most frightful thing anyone ever said to me in my life. I was absolutely electrified."

"Tell me." Al lay back on the bed, his arms behind his head.

"You must never repeat it--it's too much of a bon mot to be forgotten. Promise?...Oh, it was simply hideous of her. We were talking about love and such things and the subject turned to experiences. Suddenly she turned to me and in her most syrupy tone said, 'Nicky dear, have you ever had an affair with a married man.' I was too horrified to speak for ten minutes." He was pleased, however. Al knew how long such a choice morsel could be a secret in Nicky's bosom. He was fond of the shady stories that circulated about his own person. "So you see what a fiend you chose for your affair," he added.

"Kit's nothing like that, though.

"Are you in love with Kit, Al?"

"Hell, I don't know. It was the first time he had faced the question directly. "She's been awfully good to me. She puts up with a hell of a lot. You can't imagine how it was to have her always with me when Julie was hurt and Joe was killed. You don't go thru an experience like that without having something happen."

"You're in love." There was no doubt in Nicky's tone.

"Whether I am or not, I can't see that it'll do me any good. I'm not good for anything. Besides the trouble with Mary, there's my school work. I promised her I'd study tonight and look at me. I know I should have stayed home, but after that battle with Julie I couldn't force myself to walk back in that house. You don't know..."

"Don't be sorry for yourself," said Nicky abruptly.

"Besides what has your school work got to do with your loving her? It doesn't affect your virility."

"Nor that kind of love, Nicky."

Nicky snorted and went to the bookcase.

"Oh, it's physical too, I suppose, but she isn't the type."

"Are you sure?"

"I haven't tried anything." Al frowned impatiently.

"Look Nicky, I'm the one who doesn't want it to be that kind of love."

"How can it be anything else after you've slept with Mary. You surely aren't thinking of marrying Kit?" Nicky pulled out a volume and returned to the bedside.

"I don't know," Al said glumly.

"Were you the one who was asking me about T. S. Eliot?" Nicky opened the book.

"No."

"No."

"I shall read him to you, however. You're in the proper mood."

Through the reading, no clear meaning came to Al. It was more like a half-heard background of melancholy music. His eyes wandered listlessly to the wall paper. Normal-looking wall paper. Oval floral pattern in lateral rows on a bland blur-grey background. The center of each floral group was yellow with two green leaves which, on the side wall, appeared to be the placid face of a yellow cow with two green ears. One row of cows faced left, the next faced right and so on up to the ceiling.

When he looked across the room, however, one of the cows resolved itself into a dog, with the two leaves as a collar, but only for an instant. Then instead of either dogs or cows Al found himself looking at rows of yellow kittens with two green eyes. One row of kittens faced left, the next row faced right and so on up to the ceiling. After he saw the kittens, he could no longer find either the cows or dogs. The more he looked the more real the kittens became until he had to glance up at the wall next to his head to make sure it had really been a floral pattern in the first place.

Nicky finished his reading with a flourish and put the book away without further comment. "Do you know it's almost midnight?" he said after a moment.

"Time to go." Al sat up and looked around for his shoes.

"Surely not to study?"

"No." He slipped his feet in and laced them. "Come on," he said straightening up. Nicky followed obediently without a word.

Al was never sure where they drove that night. He remembered seeing Millis, Hudson, and Holliston, but afterward he had no idea how to find them again. Hardly a word was spoken for nearly two hours. It was windy and black when they started. He pushed the car as hard as it would go along the winding country roads, hugging the dark corners, opening up wide on the brief straight stretches, wrestling with it to keep it on the road as they hit curves again. The invisible wind pouring over and around the windshield seemed almost tangible--black vapor, like the night.

Then, towards two, the wind died, and a small orange-brown half moon appeared occasionally above the trees. Al gradually let the tempo drop until they were barely moving along in the shadows. When they came to the lake, he shut the lights off and pulled to the side of the road. The engine muttered to itself for a minute before he allowed it to die, too.

It was just a small lake, hardly more than a pond, but you knew at a glance that it was evil. From the roadside you looked down over a long, shadowy, hubbly bank of weeds into

the water--black water, faintly traced by the path of the orange-brown moon. The opposite shore...indistinct, lurking neither near nor distant.

"That's a hateful moon," Nicky said after a few minutes.

"Isn't it." Al lit a cigarette and went out to sit alone on the front fender...Evil water...the sort of lake where the arm came up to receive Excalibur, only smaller. The tarn by the House of Usher. Lethe. The river of oblivion to tantalize the condemned souls. Al half started down to the water, then resumed his seat. If you didn't look too closely you wouldn't be disappointed. Best to let it remain unreal...

It was after five when they came back to sit in front of Nicky's. In the darkness the house, too, looked wonderfully unreal and untouchable. A soft castle, endlessly waiting.

Then suddenly Al realized that dawn was coming.

The house lost its fantastic shape and turned stark against the brightening November morning sky. He became aware of the ugly black iron fire escape at the side and of the squat brick chimney. The clapboarded garage materialized at the end of the driveway, and part of yesterday's washing flapped listlessly in the growing breeze.

It would not stop, the dawn. It kept growing relentlessly, eating away imagination as sterile, hot water crumbles a lump of sugar. A milk truck rattled by out on the highway.

The cold hand of reality gripped Al's consciousness. The astronomy exam, Mary and Kit, Clifton, the rift with Julie all came crowding back upon him.

"I've got to go," he said starting the engine. Almost before Nicky was safely out of the car, he was racing down the driveway, fleeing the dawn. Through the deserted square with its traffic lights blinking yellow, over the empty parkway, all the way home it kept on his heels...gaining...slowly gaining. By the time he left the car in the yard it was full light. Half closing his eyes, he ran inside and up to the third floor, looking neither right nor left. He dumped his clothes and fell into bed but the light kept coming. He pulled the shade down. Outside the window a pigeon started its unmusical coo. The other birds were awake too, filling the room with their cheerful morning song.

"Oh God." He pulled the covers up over his head in an effort to close them out. "Damn birds, anyhow."

There was a creak from the bed across the room. Clifton sat up and frowned at the sight of Al's clothes on the floor. "I thought we agreed to hang up our clothes," he said sanctimoniously shaking his head.

A tremendous rage swept over Al. He could feel his face burning under the covers, but he forced himself to stay still. Maybe Clifton would be sleepy enough to lie down and be quiet for another hour.

"I thought you were going to study for your test on the stars," Clifton continued presently. "Don't tell me you were out studying them firsthand."

Al threw off the covers and in one bound was standing over his roommate, shaking with fury. "It's none of your goddam business where I was!" he screamed. "And if you say one more word I'll throw you through that goddamn window-- and I won't bother to open it."

Clifton smirked but contented himself in lying back down without further comment. Al stood glowering beside the bed for a moment, then returned to his own. Sleep was out of the question now, but damned if Clifton would know it. He closed his eyes grimly and kept them closed.

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